RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

JUNE

25 CTS.

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Telegraph Mystery Novelette

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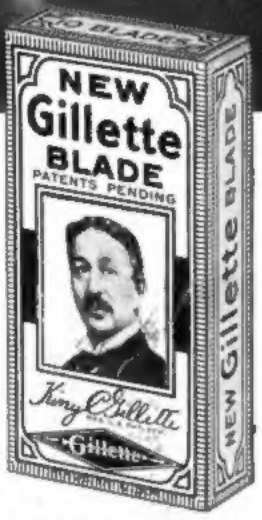
SQUARE blade-ends



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RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

Features

Operated But Not Built ..... By Charles Frederick Carter 321
Comedy and Tragedy Marked the Efforts of Men and Steel on the Big Hill.
Photographs

Hauling High Hazard ..... By John Walker Harrington 369
How the Railroads Handle the TNT With Safety to Life and Property.
Photographs

Nicaragua Lures the Boomer ..... By Lieut. Charles E. Chapel 403
Big Things in the Tropics Loom Ahead for Adventurers of the High Line.
Photographs

Old World Limiteds ..... By Ralph Heinzen 442
Where They Wheel Them Above a Mile a Minute Average for the System.
Photographs

Novelette and Short Stories

The Murder at Spire (Novelette) ..... By Bill the Boomer 333
The Engine Crew at the Shanty Found the Operator's Body—and a Mystery.
Illustrated by M. Burr

An Indefinite Leave of Absence ..... By Don Waters 352
Old Bud Was Thinking Back When He Went Up the Hill for the Meet.
Illustrated by Joseph Easley

Special Attention to Everybody ..... By Arthur K. Akers 363
Ipecac Ingalls, Pullman Po'tah, Pins His Job on a Pair of Pants.
Illustrated by Everett Lowry

Black Hand ..... By Griff Crawford 380
When It Came to Dispatching Things You Had to Hand it to the Boomer.
Illustrated by John R. Neill

Three Tests and One Trainmaster ..... By James W. Earp 390
Trouble, Tricks and Tough Traps Tore Up a Main Line's Morale.
Illustrated by Harry C. Temple

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A Magazine For Railroaders

June, 1930 Vol. II—No. 3

Railroaded ..... By Seven Anderton 430
Harvest Stiffs and Hot Times Out Where the Wheat Begins.
Illustrated by John C. Ranck

Honk and Horace ..... By Emmet F. Harte 456
Fine Feathers Don't Always Dog Out a Prize-Winning Plug Run.
Illustrated by Walter De Maris

Serial

Derails (Three Parts—Part II) ..... By E. S. Dellinger 414
Dave Meade Smiled, But He Courted Death on Rounder's Freight Crew.
Illustrated by John R. Neill

True Stories

My Greatest Thrill 448

Peg-Leg's Wild Ride ..... By L. H. Cruncleton
They Highballed the Runaway as It Headed for the Draw.
Illustrated by Fred Small

Departmental and Miscellany

Who's Who in the Crew ..... Griff Crawford 379
Malley from the Hill (Poem) ..... By Warren Blakely 402
By the Light of the Lantern 411
The "Lady" (Poem) ..... By A. W. Somerville 440
Just a Few Years Back ..... By C. Kessler 454
Our Own Language 469
The Boomers' Corner 473
On the Spot ..... With the Editors 476

COMING FOR JULY

Don Waters, whose great serial, BLOOD AND STEAM, stirred railroad men from one end of the country to the other in this magazine, will be back next month with the beginning of another gripping story of dark plotting and high romance

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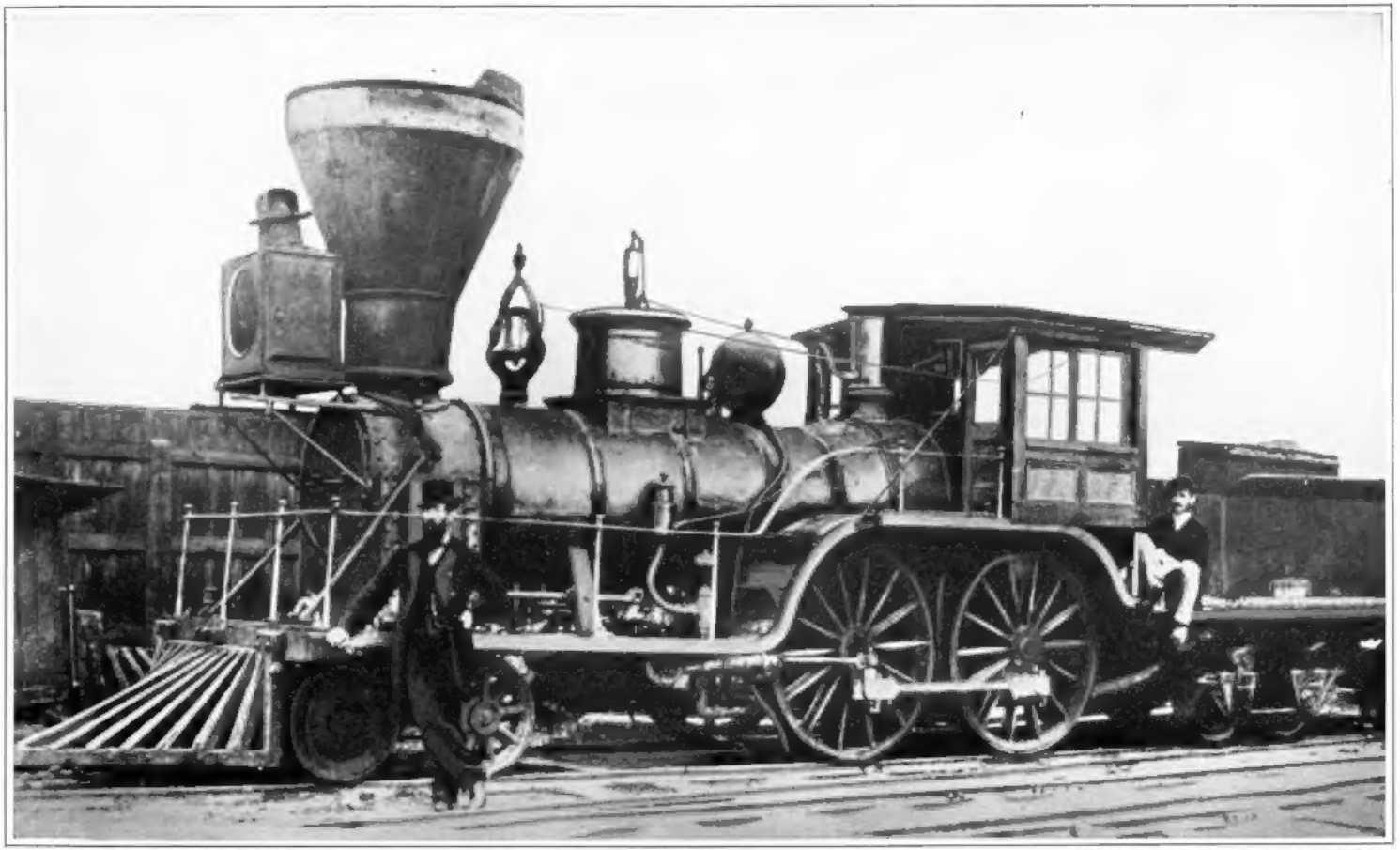


Photo by Canadian National Railways

THIS ENGINE MADE HISTORY

Railroad Man's Magazine, June, 1930

Engine No. 1, the "Lady Elgin," as It Looked in 1853—the First Engine Ever Used for Railroad Work in the Province of Ontario. It Was Built in Portland, Me.

RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

Vol. II No. 3

JUNE, 1930

Operated But Not Built

Every Known Accident Happened on the Big Hill, and a Lot That Were Never Dreamed Of

By Charles Frederick Carter

IF you were on a Canadian Pacific train traveling west and should look out of a window toward the north six miles after passing Lake Louise Station you would see a rustic sign announcing that you were on the summit of the Great Divide.

Beneath the sign you might also see a little stream, the waters of which divide and take opposite courses. One half eventually reaches Hudson Bay and the Atlantic Ocean; the other flows into the Pacific. Two miles down the latter stream would bring you to Hector, two thousand, three hundred and sixty-eight miles west of Montreal. Hector marks the upper end of a grade that will live in Canadian Pacific history as the Big Hill. The lower end of this grade is at Field, one thousand one hundred and forty-four feet lower. Twenty years ago Field was eight miles from Hector. But to-day, although neither Hector nor Field has moved an inch, the distance between them is four miles greater.

Furthermore, it appears that officially there was no railroad between Hector and Field until August, 1909, although the Canadian Pacific had operated trains over that eight miles for nearly twenty-three years.

To unravel this mystery you must return to the Continental Divide, where a granite shaft was erected to the memory of Sir James Hector. For it is around Sir James that the story of the Big Hill centers—or rather, around Sir James and an ill-tempered cayuse. No monument has been erected to the cayuse, although he really played the star rôle in the sequence of events by which British Columbia was linked to the eastern part of the Dominion. The story of Sir James and the cayuse is embalmed in a British Blue Book, and hence can-

not be questioned in any particular. A true Briton would sooner doubt Holy Writ than a Blue Book.

As the story is set forth in the Blue Book, Sir James Hector was on an exploring expedition in British Columbia in the second half of the nineteenth century. He had just crossed the Continental Divide and was searching for a way down the western slope of the range when he incautiously passed within reach of the cayuse's heels. The brute kicked him, breaking three of Sir James's ribs and apparently killing him. His Indians dug a grave for the explorer on the brink of a mountain torrent and were about to lower him into it when he revived sufficiently to ask them if they would kindly postpone the funeral.

As soon as he was able to travel, Sir James explored the stream on the banks of which his last resting place had been chosen and discovered the negotiable route down the range he had hitherto sought in vain. In grateful recognition of the instrument which had led to the discovery of the pass, Sir James immortalized the cayuse by naming the stream in its honor "Kicking Horse River."

The Hudson Bay Company laid out a trail along Hector's route which became its main road to the valley of the Columbia River. Later the Canadian Pacific's engineers, on the theory that a railroad should be able to get down any hill that a dog train or a river could descend, laid its rails down the eight miles between what are now the stations of Hector and Field.

Some time afterward the railroad company claimed to have completed the transcontinental line which it had contracted with the Canadian Government in 1881 to build, connecting the seaboard of British Columbia with the railway system of Eastern Canada. In 1885 they drove what was alleged to be the "last spike" at Craigellachie, one hundred and sixty-six miles west of Hector and three hundred and fifty-one miles from Vancouver on the Pacific coast.

The company's claim, however, was disputed by the Canadian Government, which, having undertaken to pay a subsidy of twenty-five million dollars and twenty-five million acres of land for building the road, asserted the right to say when it was completed. The government pointed out that whereas their agreement stipulated that the maximum grade should nowhere exceed three per cent the grade on the Big Hill was four and a half per cent for more than three miles, and from three and a half to four per cent for the rest of the way. They refused to admit that any railroad had been built on the Big Hill or to pay any subsidy.

"Now," said the Canadian Government in substance, "please don't argue. We don't give a hang if you are running trains over it—that eight-mile stretch of railroad between Hector and Field has not been built, and that's *that!*"

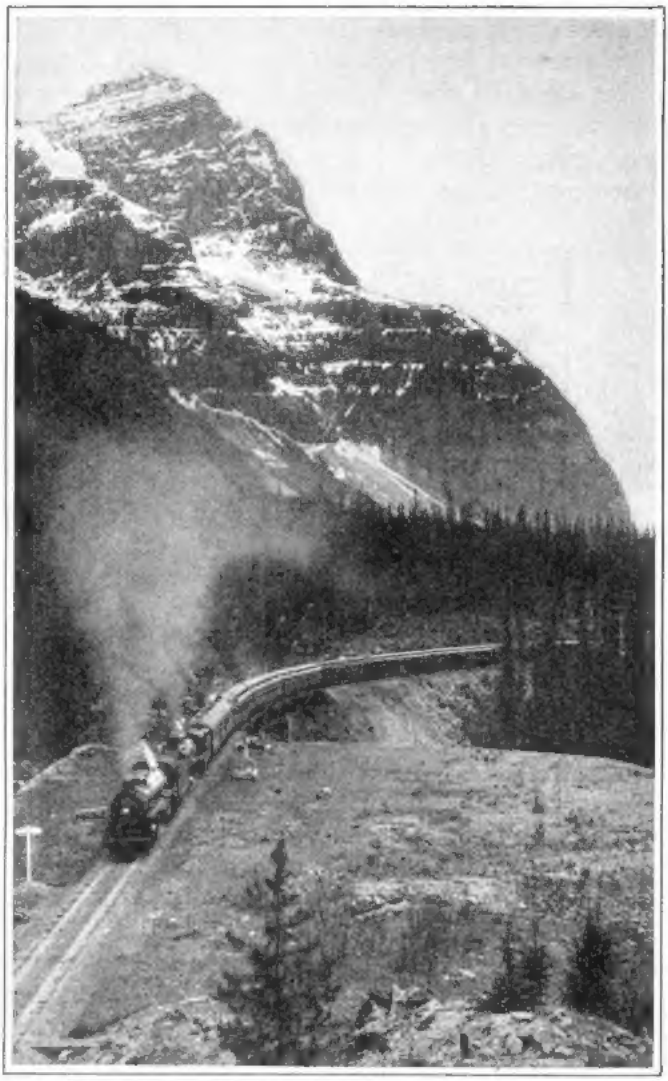
Here was a how-d'ye-do! After straining its resources beyond their elastic limit to build a railroad through two thousand miles of wilderness in which traffic was non-existent, the Canadian Pacific was left with nothing but loose ends. No better route than the one chosen was available; and even if there had been the Canadian Pacific could not have borrowed another dollar from its own mother to build a new road. There seemed to be nothing to do but to abandon the undertaking, or continue to run trains over eight

miles of track that did not officially exist.

Tough Going

THE company chose the latter alternative; but, no doubt, the operating department many a time regretted fervently that the other horn of the dilemma had not been chosen. That eight miles, with its grades of four and a half per cent, which is two hundred and thirty-seven feet drop to the mile, and curves of eleven and a half degrees, held the undisputed distinction of being the worst bit of standard gauge line on earth during the twenty-three years it was in service.

The first train that ever attempted the descent of the Big Hill, a construction outfit of two locomotives and three flat cars, ran away, climbed the rail on a curve and plunged to the bed of the Kicking Horse River, three hundred feet below, killing three men. Thereafter the Big Hill was one long nightmare for the whole operating department. Every kind of trouble that has ever happened on a railroad, not to mention new varieties, was continually recurring in spite of the most stringent precautions.



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Entering Lower Tunnel, Mt. Ogden. Mt. Stephen Is in the Background

First, the difficulty of operating trains over grades requiring four locomotives to haul each train. Naturally, this provided four chances for delay, due to engine failure, instead of one.

Then, in winter the temperature often sank to forty degrees below zero, and Arctic winds from off the great Yoho ice fields howled down the valley, covering the side of Mount Stephen

on which the railroad was built with enormous drifts of hard, dry snow.

However, the Big Hill was not dependent upon anything so lacking in picturesqueness as an engine failure or a snowstorm to furnish excitement

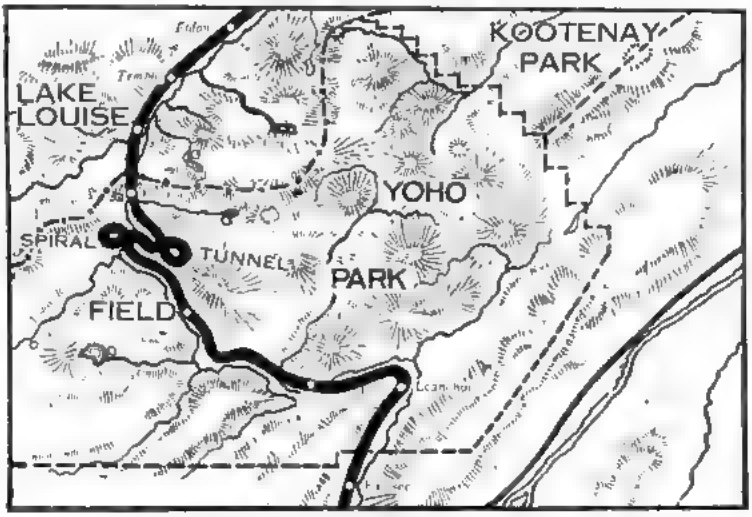
For example, it was on the Big Hill that "Dad" Ames achieved the truly remarkable feat of losing a snow plow. Any one who has ever seen the wing plows used on the Canadian Pacific for bucking snow will concede that something akin to genius would be required to lose such an unwieldy piece of property, for it is an affair of wood and steel weighing about forty tons, with a body about the size of a box car and wings that cut a swath sixteen feet wide through snowdrifts.

Dad was the engineer on the locomotive pushing the snow plow. He started up the hill out of Field with "Tommy Cod" Conger as lookout in the cupola of the snow plow and the usual crew inside to operate the wings and flanger. He bowled along at the usual speed for a couple of miles, with the usual clouds of snow flung back against the cab windows shutting off his view.

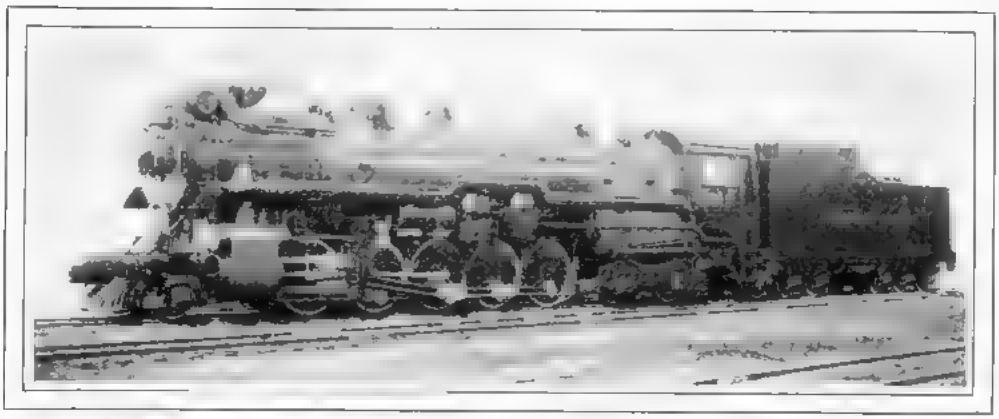
He knew by instinct when he reached the tunnel, two miles east of Field, and so eased up on the throttle and the cut-off. When he emerged from the tunnel he "dropped her down" and opened the throttle for the encounter with the drifts to be expected there. But somehow things did not seem to be going right, so Dad opened his window and looked out

The snow plow was gone!

It was so incredible—so absurdly impossible for that plow to disappear without a trace—that Dad had to walk ahead and feel around in the air where the plow should have been before he could convince himself that it was not there. He started back slowly while he and his fireman kept a sharp lookout on both sides. He backed up all the way to Field without finding any sign of the plow or of its crew. Dad was so perplexed that he went to the office and asked if they could tell him positively whether or not he had really started out with a snow plow.



This Map Shows Where All the Hard Running Once Took Place



The New 5900's Take the Drags Over the Rockies with Little Effort To-day

With a volunteer searching party Dad started up the hill again. Near the west portal of the tunnel one of the searchers thought he heard some one talking. Upon investigation the voice proved to belong to Tommy Cod, who was presently discovered floundering up from the river, punctuating each hard-won step with scandalous invectives. The snow plow, he reported, was lying at the river's edge three hundred feet below the track. When it left the rails he had been thrown out of the cupola on to a rock, from which he ricocheted to another, and from thence went bouncing down the hill from rock to rock in a series of graceful parabolas with the snow plow in hot pursuit, until both landed in a deep drift from which he had much difficulty in emerging. None of the crew was injured, but they would be much obliged to any one who would kindly dig them out.

Glacier Trouble

Just how that snow plow came to leave the track, and, above all, how it managed to disappear without attracting the attention of the engineer and fireman behind it, is a mystery that no one has ever been able to solve.

Away up on the brow of Mount Stephen a glacier hangs on the edge of a cliff from the foot of which a steep talus slopes down to the track, five thousand feet below. One day, when there did not appear to be anything else that could make trouble on the Big Hill, several million tons of ice broke off and came thundering down the slope, sweeping fifteen hundred feet of track, together with the roadbed, ditches and everything else on the right of way, clear down into the river below.

Most of the sensational incidents on the Big Hill arose from the steepness of that grade of 237 feet to the mile.

The steepest grades on any standard gauge line in the United States or Canada to-day are short stretches of four per cent on the Denver and Rio Grande Western in Colorado. This is twenty-six feet per mile less than the ruling grade on the Big Hill. No man in his right mind would think of building a railroad with even four per cent grades in these expensive days. Without doubt the Big Hill can be called the steepest grade ever regularly operated as part of a standard gauge main line.

The honor came high, for four consolidation engines each weighing 154

tons and having a tractive force of 36,000 pounds were required to take a train of 710 tons up the Big Hill; and it was an hour's work under favorable conditions to do it. Such a train would consist of fourteen to twenty freight cars or eleven coaches.

But locomotives, like mountain climbers, find it easier to go up than to come down. It was getting down the Big Hill which worried every one. Since a grade of two and a half per cent has been enough to get up a runaway, ending with the destruction of the train and the death of the crew, it is plain that a grade nearly twice as steep is extremely dangerous.

On reaching the top of the Big Hill every westbound passenger train stopped while air brakes and sanding apparatus were inspected and tested. Retaining valves on cars were closed, so that if the engineer had to release the brakes for a moment in order to recharge the auxiliary reservoirs, a pressure of fifteen pounds per square inch would still be retained in the brake cylinders.

Then the train crept down cautiously, while brakemen watched to make sure that wheels were not sliding nor heating unduly. Since the retarding power of brakes grows less with increase in speed, eight miles an hour was fixed as the limit for passenger trains.

Box and flat cars being harder to manage than coaches, freight trains were restricted to six miles an hour. Two consolidation engines were permitted to take no more than seventeen loaded cars in daylight or twelve cars at night down the hill. Brakes on every car were set by hand, the brakeman inserting a pick handle or "club" in the brake wheel to obtain sufficient leverage to apply brakes as tightly as they could be set without sliding the wheels. The powerful water brakes on the locomotives were brought into service, and the long toboggan slide was begun. The air brakes were reserved for emergencies.

If a train should get beyond control, in spite of these precautions, there were three safety switches or catch sidings about nine-tenths of a mile apart on the steepest part of the hill that might save a runaway train. These safety switches were at spurs leading up the mountainside on a steep incline. Day and night, tenders were stationed at these safety switches. They were always kept set for the spurs, being turned to the main line only long enough to permit passage of trains. The tender at the first switch was notified by telephone when a train left Hector so that he would be sure to be at his post. He in turn notified the second switch tender, who notified the third and then took his place at the switch stand.

A thousand feet ahead of the first switch the engineer of a descending train, provided he was not exceeding the speed limit and had full control of his train, was required to sound a warning blast. When within three hundred feet he blew four short blasts. This was the signal to throw the switch to the main line.

Under the rules it then became the duty of the switch tender to determine with the aid of an automatic speed recorder whether the approaching train was exceeding the speed limit. If not he opened the switch and allowed it to proceed; but if it was going too fast he was supposed to let it run up on the catch siding, which was expected to stop the train.

This was the theory on which operating rules for the Big Hill were

formulated. In practice, switch tenders were more than once called upon to determine in a moment whether it would be more agreeable for the company to have the wreck in a retired spot up on the spur, or to let it muss up the main line—where it would be handy for the wrecking crew, but where the débris would be in full view from passenger trains.

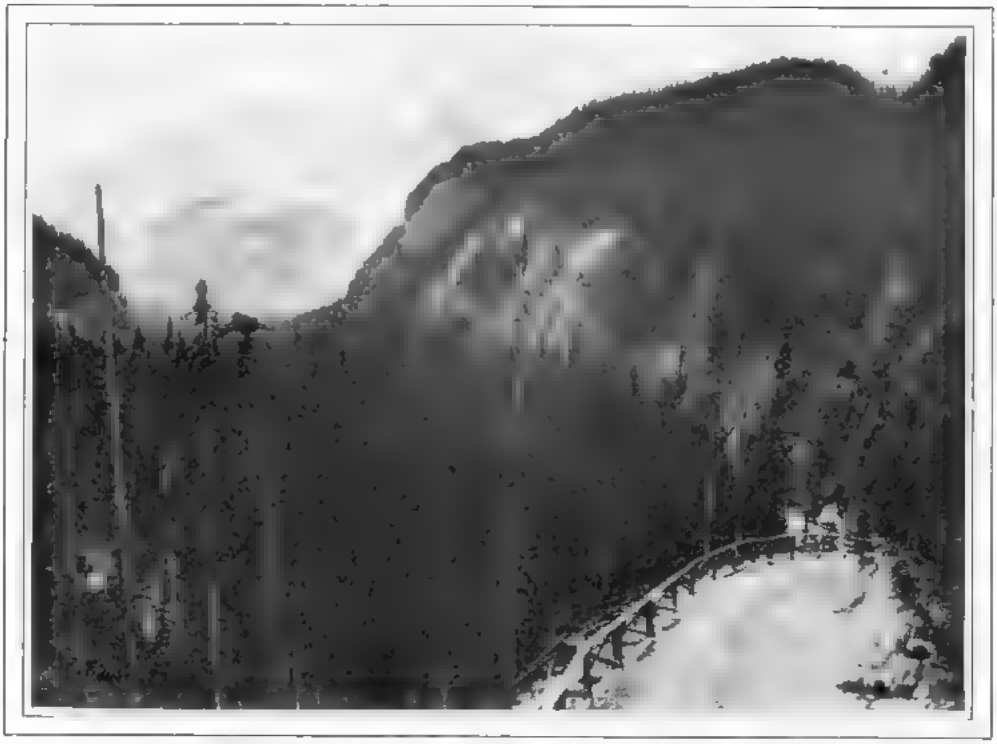
Here Is the Top of the World on the C. P. R., Where Lofty Peaks Loom High

Runaway Hogs

In some cases engineers, upon finding their trains running away, have been known to call for the switches in the forlorn hope that they might stick to the rails. One day in January, 1909, for instance, an engine coming down the hill "caboose bounce"—with only a caboose—got out of control just below the first safety switch. As soon as the hogger realized that his engine was running away he concluded that he would rather walk. Pausing only long enough to yank open the throttle and yell to the fireman, he dropped out of the cab window, trusting to luck to land on a soft rock.

The engine was already reversed to use the water brake; so when steam was admitted to the cylinders the drivers began to spin impotently backward, decreasing their holding power. The engine shot down the mountain at a speed which increased every instant. The conductor and brakemen lost no time in following the example of the engineer and fireman, disembarking with more celerity than dignity.

All hands had done everything that human power could do before the runaway was abandoned to its fate. That was not long delayed; for a runaway on a grade of two hundred and thirty-



A View from the Automobile Switchback on Yoho Trail, near Field, B. C

seven feet to the mile can cover the nine-tenths of a mile between safety switches in next to no time. Seeing the runaway leaping down the mountain, with its driving wheels encircled by halos of fire as they ground sparks from the rails, the switch tender leaped over the bank and fled toward the river

After breaking away from the caboose the jack took the switch in safety. Being light, and having its brakes set to the limit of effectiveness, the caboose slowed down the instant it was released from the locomotive. The latter ran up the steep grade of the spur to the very end. The forward trucks even went six feet off the ends of the rails before the runaway came to a stand.

All this time the driving wheels were steadily whirling backward to the accompaniment of a violent sputter from the exhaust. When the engine came to a stop the wheels had an opportunity to grip. After a pause the hog pulled its truck back on the rails Then, under a full head of steam, it shot back down the steep incline like a cannon ball—toward the caboose which was still loitering at the switch.

There was an explosive crash as that hundred and fifty tons of steel leaped upon the defenseless caboose, followed after a brief interval by a shower of pine splinters. There was not enough left of that caboose to provide souvenirs for the crew. In the crash the engine contrived to derail a tender truck, and thus brought the incident to a close with a minimum of delay to traffic.

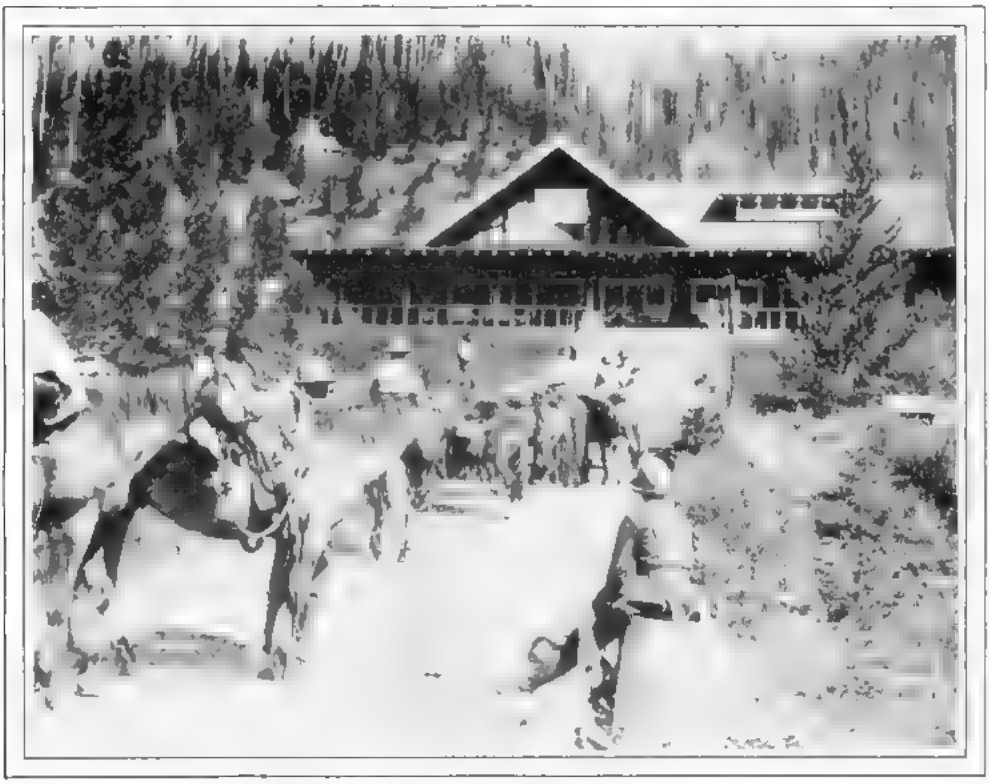
But runaways on the Big Hill were often more serious. On the night of January 28, 1889, for instance, Con-

ductor Robert Nelson and Engineer J. H. Spencer started down the hill with a train of fourteen loads of coal drawn by a consolidation engine. They passed the second safety switch with their train under control; but immediately thereafter it began gathering speed. Seeing that it could not be stopped, the engineer jumped, calling to Fireman C. A. Fidler to follow him.

The conductor helped Brakeman J. G. Phelan tighten a brake, and then started back over the train. Before he could reach the next brake a grinding, bumping uproar told that the engine and some of the cars had left the rails Almost in the same instant the whole train plunged down the mountainside with a fearful crash. Nelson and his end man were thrown among the rocks clear of the wreck, and escaped with trifling bruises. With Engineer Spencer they hurried to the heap of battered steel that had been the locomotive, in time to pull the fireman out of the debris before he died.

Stayed With His Train

Another runaway that ended in a tragedy occurred in January, 1904. Instead of jumping, Engineer Jack Ladner determined to save his train or perish with it, even though it was only ten cars of coal. As soon as he realized that his train was getting out of control he applied the air brakes, reserved on freight trains as a last resort; opened the sand valves, and began to whistle for the second safety switch. Apparently he thought that if he could keep on the main line he might reach the bottom in safety.



A Camp on the Lake at Hector

So swiftly had the runaway gathered speed that the switch tender was unable to get the lever set. The engine struck the switch just as the rails were half over. The ponderous machine bounded over the ties for a few yards, then swung toward the mountainside and went over. At that spot was a narrow stretch of soft earth several feet deep. The locomotive buried itself, turning up a rock two-thirds the size of a box car.

It was two days before the bodies of the engineer and fireman were recovered. Although the cars were completely demolished, nothing being left worth hauling away, the two brakemen escaped with their lives, although one of them was badly hurt. The conductor was not even scratched.

Any of the old men in that part of the world can tell you how Jimmy Fidler started down the Big Hill one summer day with a light engine. He let the engine get away from him, and Jimmy found himself approaching the first safety switch at a speed several times greater than eight miles an hour. The hog had been reversed from the start in order to use the water brake; so all Jimmy could do was to attempt an emergency application of the air brakes and drop sand on the rails. Having done this without producing any visible effect, Jimmy turned to his fireman with a sickly grin and shouted:

"Here goes for Field!"

So saying, he reached for the whistle lever and sounded four sharp imperious yelps as an indication to the switch tender that he wanted the main line. For fear the signal might not be taken seriously, Jimmy repeated it and then gave it a third time.

The switch tender saw that the approaching engine was unmistakably running away. He knew that the rules warned him, in big black type, that under such circumstances he was to leave the switch set for the spur. But here was a man clearly going to destruction, who wanted to meet his fate on the main line. Between obeying the rules and humoring a dying man the switchman chose the latter, and Jimmy shot down the main line hooting for the second switch.

No. 1 switch tender decided to wait for the crash before telephoning for the wrecking crew. But the whistling continued. No. 2 switchman obeyed its command, and so did No. 3. Three profoundly astonished railroad men along the mountainside gazed open-mouthed after a trail of smoke. The sound of the whistle came faintly up; Jimmy had formed the habit.

As for the fireman, he was too busy to be astonished. His first impulse had been to jump, at the earliest symptoms of a runaway; but the rocks looked so hard. Jimmy's frozen grin had also made him hesitate, so that by the time he made up his mind to act the jack was moving too fast. It jerked from side to side as it took the sharp curves with a violence that called for the fireman's undivided attention to keep himself from being thrown against the boiler head and having his brains knocked out. Jimmy sat erect, staring straight ahead and working the whistle lever like an automaton. Apparently he did not know he was doing it.

Two miles and a quarter from Field there was a short tunnel which marked the bottom of the steepest grade. On emerging from the tunnel the runaway began to slow. Then the two men, recovering their self-possession, looked out upon the bright world in pleased surprise at finding themselves still in it.

Reaction from their wild ride produced in both such an exaltation of spirits that by the time they reached Field they had convinced themselves that they had taken it on purpose. To the excited little knot of railroad men Jimmy and the fireman bragged that they had made the descent of the Big Hill in faster time than ever before; that at certain points they had attained a speed of four hundred and eighty miles an hour. The official records show, however, that they consumed seventeen minutes in covering the eight miles from Hector to Field.

Wapta Camp, on the Way from Hector to Field

The company did not appreciate Jimmy's record. He was discharged by wire, and the message was marked "Rush!"

It is not surprising that the train dispatchers gave up the Big Hill in despair. They could worry themselves

into their graves fast enough with the two and a half per cent grades in the Selkirks. At last the company relieved them and made the Hill a separate division in charge of a trainmaster who had been running on the Big Hill as brakeman and conductor until his nerves had entirely atrophied. Trains were delivered to the trainmaster at Field or Hector and moved to the other end of the block on the staff system. The only rights recognized were held by possession of a little steel wand, which, of course, could not be used by more than one train at a time.

After twenty years of experience with the Big Hill, operating eight miles of railroad that had no official existence ceased to have the charm of novelty for the Canadian Pacific. And traffic had increased so much that boosting it over the Hill had become a serious problem.

By that time, through industry and frugality, the company had reached a point where it could borrow money. Civil engineers were called in and asked if they could get rid of those four and a half per cent grades. Many a time engineers have festooned a few miles of railroad track on the mountainside to gain distance in which to reduce grades. But in this case there was no place to hang the loops, for the slopes were too steep. The Yoho Valley opens into the valley of the Kicking Horse River in the right position for distance, but the walls are almost vertical. In addition, the Yoho Valley is notorious for its snowslides. So the Yoho Valley could not be considered. There was nothing to do but stick fairly close to the old route.

A civil engineer can do anything for which anybody will pay the bills. Mr. Gustav Lindenthal, who designed the Hell Gate Bridge, once declared that from an engineering standpoint it would be feasible to bridge the Atlantic Ocean.

Canadian Pacific engineers found a way to get down the Big Hill on a grade of 2.2 per cent, or 116 feet to the mile, instead of 237 feet. They did it by building four additional miles of railroad, which explains why it is now so much farther between Hector and Field than it used to be.

Starting from Hector, the new line proceeds westward down a maximum grade of 116 feet to the mile until it can go no farther. As there is no place for a loop or even a switchback, the train dives into a spiral tunnel from which it emerges headed straight back in the direction of Hector.

Then it wanders along the lower face of the mountain, gradually edging away until it turns suddenly and dodges across the Kicking Horse River toward the impassable barrier of Mount Ogden.

Again it dives into a spiral tunnel, turns completely around, recrosses the river and once more continues its tortuous course to Field. The upper spiral tunnel is 3,206 feet long, and turns an angle of 234 degrees on a 573 foot radius, completing the rest of a circle in the open. The drop between the upper and lower portals is 48 feet. The second spiral tunnel is 2,890 feet long with similar radius of curvature through an angle of 232 degrees, and a vertical difference of 45 feet.

Building the new line further necessitated driving a tunnel 170 feet long on a tangent connecting with the old line near Field. Now two engines of the same class as the four already mentioned can haul a train of 980 tons up the Hill

The Lifeless Face That Looked Up at Ken Was Dark, Hawklike in Features

The Murder at Spire

The Engine Crew Saw the Old Operator Alive, but When the Caboose Went Rolling By—

By Bill the Boomer

KEN LITTLEFIELD instinctively crouched lower on the swaying tops of the freight train as he felt the air bite the spinning wheels to check the drag's momentum on the long descent of Slide Mountain He paused in his catlike tread, dropped to one knee, looked forward. He could see through the biting drizzle that filled the early night, the green eye of the semaphore at the lonely block office of Spire. Turning again, eyes narrowed, peering intently toward the rear, he could see the tiny yellow light far back on the train. That should be the hind man's lantern. Beyond that light was the dim, almost imperceptible glow that marked the cupola of the caboose Ken Littlefield now crouched still lower, looking backward. He was straining to see if he could make out a black shadow somewhere between him and the lantern at the rear. That dark form should be Cling.

Ken's lean fingers spread far apart, moved unconsciously toward his thigh, then he checked himself, set his lean jaw, tried to force a grim, tight smile. Nothing moved between him and that lantern, nothing shut from his view the brave, yellow glow no matter from what angle he peered at it. Cling was not on top of the train.

A momentary frown creased the bronzed brow of the system's high under-cover man as he straightened on the swaying running board, shook his

massive shoulders — shoulders with which Ken Littlefield had once done duty on the football squad in his West Point days. He turned his attention to the head end of the train. It was possible that Cling, division special agent assigned to ride and guard the merchandise cars, had got down between the cars to ride out of the drizzle as much as possible. Or maybe Cling had conveniently disappeared to allow merchandise thieves to get in their—

Ken Littlefield's jaw again set. He thrust his hands deep into the pockets of his leather coat, turned his catlike tread forward to where another lantern—that of the head man—gleamed not fifteen cars away.

Maybe the head man had seen Cling. Ken would ask guardedly. He had to be very careful on this special mission. Had to play the part of a dumb bull, especially with the other bulls and with the crews. Merchandise thieves had been getting away with murder on the Yellowstone Division, and many men were under suspicion. It was up to Ken Littlefield to separate the wheat from the chaff, and incidentally to see that merchandise cars passed over the division unmolested. A sweet job, he reflected, as he came up to the squat form seated by the lantern.

It was at that moment that the head end of Extra 3434 East balled the jack past the Spire telegraph office. The brakeman turned his lamp up to see Ken's face, then set it back again. Ken saw the box car shanty roll into view as the extra reduced speed for the curves beyond. Ken saw the grim, white-haired, heavy-paunched form of Old Darkes, the operator at Spire, standing with his lantern in front of the weather-beaten structure; saw him raise and lower his lamp as if in a sign of greeting to the engine crew. The brakeman seated at Ken's feet gave Old Darkes a greeting signal, and Ken saw him acknowledge it—a short, listless jerk of the lantern as if the old operator resented being called upon to waste so much energy on a worthless brakeman.

"That old fool's gettin' too damn' lazy to live," the brakeman said, as if addressing himself; "an' if it ain't laziness that makes him that way it's his meanness."

Ken's eagle eyes were fixed momentarily on the silent old hermit, standing there in the drizzle, while the freight train rolled by him. And then, before he could make reply to the brakeman's comment, Ken started, narrowed his eyes. Wasn't that a dark, moving something that had just got between Ken and the old man's lantern? Only for a flash had he noticed it, then, in another second, the first swinging curve swept him from view of the lonely office. Might have been a pile of ties, or any kind of inanimate obstruction, might not have been anything. Ken dropped to a seat beside the brakeman. He was beginning to wonder if this job was getting on his nerves — this always watching for strange things in the night.

"Queer old duck, this Darkes," said Ken as he turned to the brakeman. "Quite a hermit, isn't he?"

"Mebbe you call it that," said the brakeman. "You ain't been here very long. Wait 'll you try to make friends with 'im. I tried it once an' he liked to snapped my head off."

"Yes. I've heard he isn't much inclined to be inviting company."

"Company!" The brakeman gave a snort. "Say! That old feller's been right in that shack more'n twelve years that I know of, eatin' an' sleepin' an' workin', an' they ain't nobody that's

ever seen him have a visitor or get a letter. You know what I think?"

Ken was slightly amused as the brakeman leaned forward confidentially. It was a rare thing for a brakeman ever to get so friendly with a gumshoe.

"What do you think?" Ken inquired, smiling

"I think he's a hidin' out there from somebody," the brakeman confided. "You know. You're allers readin' about fellers disappearin' from sight, an' nothin' ever bein' heard of 'em again."

"He's got a good place to be let alone in," Ken mused, looking off into the mountain blackness, "and to hide out at, for that matter. Spire is one of those places that 'd make a normal man bughouse in no time."

"That's what I'm sayin'," the brakeman said. "Old Darkes—he ain't normal. Can't tell me a feller'd live an' eat an' sleep at a job like that year in an' year out if there wasn't somethin' wrong about him."

"Maybe," said Ken, not inclined to argue the point. In fact he wasn't worrying any about Old Darkes. There was a man named Cling—

"By the way"—Ken changed the subject, speaking as though unconcerned—"you haven't by any chance seen that partner of mine over near the engine, have you?"

"You mean that other bull? Cling?"

"Yeh. Cling," said Ken. "I must have missed him awhile ago."

"Ain't seen him," said the brakeman. "Ain't been near the head end that I know of; but you guys has got ways of workin' up an' over an' around a train so's anybody on the crew don't know where you are."

Ken started at the inference. Was this brakeman suspicious of him?

"But you guys has got a tough job," the brakeman went on, and Ken relaxed, "an' I guess it's just like anything else. You got a job to do, an' you gotta do it careful like."

"You said it," Ken replied.

The eastbound extra was barely crawling along at this point, halfway down the slope of the Continental Divide. A hundred cars separated the caboose from the engine—almost the length of a mile. The speed had been reduced to not more than fifteen miles per hour on the snaky curves.

Ken shortly rose and turned his steps back over the box cars. He peered over each side and down between them, flashing his electric torch and keeping a sharp lookout for any suspiciously moving shadows.

At 8.31, exactly an hour and a half after the extra had passed the office at Spire, it came to a halt on the main line at Sentinel Butte to take water and to allow the brakemen, both head and hind end, to turn down the retainers they had set. Ken saw the lantern, which had marked the position of the hind brakeman, disappear from the top and another lantern come into view. This second light would be the conductor.

Ken dropped to the ground, examined seals, made his way toward the caboose. The conductor came up and passed him. Conductor Sam Glass, ratty eyed, cruel of lip, and sharp of feature—a boomer skipper who was hated by virtually every brakeman on the line. Conductor Sam Glass did not even give Ken a glance as he went over to the telegraph office for his orders.

Clear to the crummy at the rear, around it, and back down the other side of the train stalked Ken Littlefield. Every seal was intact. No evidence of prowlers. No sign of Cling.

Ken had again reached the center of the train when he crawled between the cars, and started over to the engine. It was possible that Cling was up ahead. As the brakeman had said, bulls have a way of moving over and around a train that's almost mysterious.

He had progressed a little distance when he met Sam Glass heading back to the caboose. Ken came up out of the shadows, saw the skipper start.

"See anything of my partner on this train?" Ken asked suddenly.

"Your partner." Ken felt the sneer rather than saw it, because the dark face of Glass was in the shadow above his lantern top. "I ain't got time to be checkin' up on you sleuths, not me."

Ken's fingers widened apart instinctively, then he smiled grimly.

"Notice those seals near the engine as you came over?"

"That's your job," the conductor snarled. "Get rid uh some uh you bulls an' mebbe railroads wouldn't have so many theft claims."

It was a cold, nasty voice. Ken felt the red flush of anger tint the bronze of his cheeks, but choked a retort as the conductor turned and went on. Ken stared after his huge bulk a moment. Then the engineer called in the flag, a highball waved from the rear, and Ken climbed aboard as the extra proceeded on its way.

It was at the station of Medicine Flats that Ken Littlefield saw the commotion, saw the operator run out in the glare of the extra's headlight, waving his lantern frantically in a stop sign. The semaphore was set at clear. Ken wondered a moment, then saw an excited group in the glow from the depot windows. The engineer barked twice with his whistle, put the air on the wheels, ground to a stop. Ken swung down from his box car roost, reached the platform, went up to the operator in time to hear the man saying, as if to some of the group about him:

"Ain't got no idee where to look fer this feller, Littlefield. Maybe I better ast the conductor—"

"Littlefield," said Ken, flashing a gold badge beneath his leather coat.

"You—you—"

But Ken already had grabbed the yellow message blank the operator held, while the operator brought up his lantern to enable Ken to read the script.

"Operator Darkes, Spire, found shot to death in front of telegraph office by engine crew 1st 94 at 7.58 P.M. Holding engine crew at Sentinel Butte for your immediate return."

That was all, save the initials of Division Superintendent Mayhew Ken's jaw hardened as he crumpled the message in his big fist. Darkes—7.58 P.M.! Why, that was less than an hour after Ken had seen the old man while looking over the train to catch sight of Cling! Ken grabbed the lantern from the operator, swung a highball sign to the engine. Far back along the train another lantern, that of the conductor, perhaps, who should have started over, answered, and the extra pulled out while Ken rapidly shot questions at the nervous telegrapher. All the man knew was what he'd heard on the wire; 1st 94's engine crew had arrived at Sentinel Butte at 9.10 and reported to the dispatcher. Ken looked at his watch, it was 9.22 now, and Sentinel Butte was twenty-five miles behind him. Nothing going west for an hour yet

"How about the section foreman?" Ken asked. "Hasn't he got a gasoline car?"

"Yeh. I reckon so," the operator replied. At Ken's demand a bystander was dispatched to the section foreman's home, and the foreman came back to see what was in the air. Ken told him briefly. The gasoline car was brought out, and the system's star under-cover man rattled westward over the Medicine Flats switch points, with the section foreman as his pilot, at 9.33.

II

THE second scene of commotion Ken faced that night was in the telegraph office of the Sentinel Butte station. He arrived on the gas car at half past ten, found the engine crew of 1st 94, the county sheriff and the operator. The sheriff was asking questions, apparently had just arrived. Ken introduced himself, interrupted.

"Wait a minute," he said tersely. "Let me get a little bit of this. All I know is that an engine crew found a body at Spire at 7.58. This the crew?"

Ken turned to a short, squinty-eyed hogger and a thick-shouldered main line fireman.

"Yeh," said the engineer. "We found the carcass hangin' to a nail."

"You found what?" Ken's face came close to the hogger's.

"Like we jest told the sheriff," the engineer insisted. "We got a message at Homestead at the top of the mountain tellin' us to look out sharp at Spire on the way down. The dispatcher said he couldn't raise nobody at Spire, an' maybe they was trouble."

"What time was this?" asked Ken sharply.

"Maybe 7.25. Or a little before. We pulled outta Homestead at 7.25."

"And what did you see at Spire?"

"That's what I started to tell you. We come down easy, an' we seen Old Darkes standin', it looked like, in front of his shanty with his lantern in his hand. We drifted closer, an' we seen he wasn't standin' but was kinda slumped like. We stopped, an' me an' the fireman got off to take us a look. Old Darkes was stark dead, an' was hangin' to a nail or a spike that was caught in his coat collar, keepin' him up."

"Did you fellows bother the body?" Ken cracked out.

"Naw. We was gonna take him down, but we reckoned we better high-tail it into here an' report it first. We been laid out here since 9.10 waitin' for the law to show up, he only come a few minutes ago."

"Where's the coroner?" Ken demanded, wheeling about.

"Be here any minnit," piped the little sheriff.

"I got a coach an' a engine ready fer you guys," said the yardmaster who'd just come in.

"We gonna stay here all night?" the engineer wanted to know.

Ken and the sheriff held a brief conference, decided it had been pretty well established that Darkes had died before the engine crew appeared on the scene. There would have to be an inquest, and these men would have to be examined, but that could be done tomorrow. The engine crew was told it could resume the journey.

The coroner showed up in a few minutes, and the engine and coach, manned by Sentinel Butte's one yard crew, took Ken and the officials twenty miles up the mountain to the scene of the crime.

They found the body of Old Darkes just as the engine crew of 1st 94 had described it. The sheriff sucked wind through set teeth under his drooping mustache, the coroner squinted. A

spike, the sharp point of which protruded through the side wall of the shanty, was supporting the lifeless bulk. A lighted lantern dangled from the clenched left hand.

Ken examined first the cinders which marked the platform about the desolate office. Nothing distinct there. The drizzle continued, the cinders glistened under the electric torch, but they spoke of nothing. The coat was buttoned tight about Darkes's heavy paunch. Blood had clotted in the region of the heart beneath the rain-soaked garment. Ken studied the head, sunken forward on the chest, then turned the body over to the coroner who took it from the spike, laid it face down on the cinders

They Found the Body of Old Darkes, Just as the Engine Crew of First 94 Had Described It

"Unh," grunted Ken, bringing his torch into play. "The old fellow didn't have much chance, it looks like."

The bullet had entered Darkes's back and had been fired at close quarters. The coat showed the burns from the powder. The sheriff reached into the pockets, found a wallet and a watch. Nothing else. Ken held a light while the two of them inspected the wallet. It contained fifty dollars in filthy currency. There was no brotherhood card, no letters, no papers of any kind.

"Waal," said the

sheriff, "the guy that did this trick mustn't have been after money."

"Maybe not," said Ken as he remembered the remark of the brakeman that Darkes might have been hiding away from some one. At the same time he recalled the glimpse he'd got of something moving between him at his perch on the top of the extra, and the old man's lantern at the shack. And Cling! His lips formed into a grim, tight line.

A switchman helped the coroner and the sheriff load the body into the wooden coach while Ken turned his attention to the interior of the shanty. It was divided into two rooms by a thin partition. The door from the cinders entered the telegraph compartment while the other end of the shack was used for living quarters. Ken halted on the doorstep, dropped to one knee, played his torch over the bare pine planks. Then, eyes hardening, he leaned down closer to a dark stain, drew a sharp breath.

"Footprints?" the sheriff asked, coming up from behind and pausing abruptly.

"Blood," said Ken grimly. "Easy now. Careful where you walk."

The sheriff tiptoed into the living compartment while Ken turned his attention to the telegraph table where the brass instruments chattered away busily in a blur of train reports, train orders and messages. The feeble rays of the shaded oil lamp played upon the relays and sounders and keys; played upon a single white sheet of paper—a ruled form for the recording of train movements past a station.

Ken bent closely over the sheet, saw the date inscribed at the top in the peculiar, rolling script common to all telegraphers. There was an entry of a westbound train passing at 6.02, just two minutes after Old Darkes had opened the station for the night. Then followed an eastbound mail train at 6.28. Next was the entry of Extra 3434 East — the train on which Ken had ridden down the mountain.

The eyes of the ex-West Pointer narrowed a bit as he leaned closer. An entry in a column opposite Extra 3434 East showed the time as 7.04. Ken studied the figures for a moment, then removed the sheet, carefully folded and placed it in a breast pocket. Next he turned his attention to the telegraph key, the one used for the reporting of trains to the dispatcher. Now he came halfway out of his chair. That key had been wiped clean of finger-prints!

"I guess they ain't nothin' much in there," the sheriff broke into Ken's thoughts suddenly, nodding over his shoulder to the door in the partition. "Kinda messed up, but nothin' that 'd look like any clews to this here thing."

"Nothing?" Ken turned abruptly. "Let's have a look."

Messed up was no name for it. The room had been virtually overturned. The spare furniture was topsy-turvy, the drawers in a rickety old chest had been turned inside out. A few garments were scattered about, a mattress was half on the floor. A rent in the side of the ticking attracted Ken's sharp eye. He stepped over to it, studied it more closely, saw where it had been sewn up. Yes, sewn up repeatedly. Heavy needle pricks told the story.

"Nothing much, I guess," Ken said half to himself. "How about you, sheriff? What's your guess?"

"I ain't got no guess. They's somethin' damn' queer about this business, I'm tellin' you. It's dead shore somebody wasn't after his money. What was it, then?"

"Just what you think somebody wasn't after," said Ken with a grim smile. "Money!"

"Why—why, they didn't take nothin' outta his wallet."

"No, they didn't," Ken said. "They took considerably more. You've got to take into consideration that this murdered man was a queer bird. He's been working up here nights, and sleeping alone days for a good many years. He's been paid wages regularly once a month. He has a reputation of having never encouraged friendships. In fact, he's never left this place in more than twelve years; never has sent any mail out, nor has he received any. There's not a thing about this shack to indicate that he ever corresponded with a soul.

Ken Bent Closely Over the Sheet . . . Saw the Entry of a Westbound Train Passing at 6 02 P M

"Well, in these years, Old Darkes has drawn down quite a few thousands of dollars in cash, and if you'll look at that bed mattress you'll see he had a nice place to keep hiding his money. In fact, you'll see where he ripped that mattress open and sewed it up so many times that he's got it rotten with needle holes."

The sheriff gazed wide-eyed at the rent, turned, blinking to Ken

"Sounds reasonable," he said. "Darned if it don't. I guess I better get a posse together an' scour these here mountains."

"Might be a good idea," said Ken, "only I've got a pretty strong hunch that the man who did this job won't be found in these mountains—not by a posse."

"My men 'll find anything," the sheriff boasted.

Ken merely smiled at the little fellow and his tired-looking mustache. He knew sheriffs of this breed, knew these mountains. Spire, he knew, was impossible of approach either by horseback or automobile unless a man rode up the railroad right of way. Directly opposite the shanty a cliff rose a thou-

sand feet straight against the sky; back of it a hundred feet the mountain dropped sheer in another cliff to a valley two thousand feet below. Spire merely nestled on a shelf wide enough for the main line, the passing track and the telegraph cabin.

Ken stood in the doorway, peering into the darkness.

"I guess they ain't nothin' more we can do here," said the sheriff, apparently anxious to be moving on. "I wanna get my posse."

"Let me take a look around outside," said Ken. "Then we'll go."

Ken wasn't clear in his mind about that stain in the middle of the floor. He turned to it, studied it again. Then he went back to the spot where the body had been hanging, looked more closely at the cinders. The sheriff hung at his shoulder.

Suddenly Ken straightened, walked rapidly across the cinders to the edge of the ties at the main line. Here he dropped to his knees, scrutinized the gravel, emitted a low whistle. The gravel was gray with the dampness, but a darker blot showed under his torch. Might be grease, but it wouldn't do any harm to look farther across the rails. Two distinct marks were visible as if made by something dragging.

Ken followed the marks, saw other stains which might or might not be grease. He continued across the rails of the passing track, stopped at the edge of the ditch.

"Damn!" He hissed the word as his torch light played on the muddy earth in the slight depression.

"Good Gawd," the sheriff breathed at his elbow. "This *is* somethin'."

Below them they saw a crumpled body, face down in the trickle of water that ran at the bottom of the embankment. They scrambled down, and the sheriff helped Ken turn the body face up.

"Cling!" Ken staggered back.

The sheriff pelted Ken with a lot of questions, and Ken explained briefly that Cling had been a railroad bull riding the extra that had passed by Spire at 7.04. The man had been shot through the head, drilled between the eyes.

They tugged at the grim form, got it back to the right of way. The coroner was called, and the body of Cling was taken into the coach and placed beside that of Darkes. Ken took Cling's gun from the shoulder holster, snapped it open. It had been fired once, and not so long ago.

Ken went back to the gravel, searched up and down for further clews. The sheriff aided, and discovered a pair of tracks next to the main line. He called Ken, who made an examination.

"Reckon that means anything?" the sheriff wanted to know.

"Looks like the impression left by a hand car being set off, or standing. We'll make a note of it anyhow."

"I shore don't make nothin' outta this mess," mumbled the sheriff.

Ken, however, couldn't agree with the officer of the county. He walked back up to the shanty, put out the lights, set both semaphores green, then boarded the coach. The grim cargo was taken back to Sentinel Butte.

III

THE sheriff announced that he would hold a formal inquest the following afternoon, and Ken said he would help get the crew of the extra and the engine crew of the train that had found the body of Darkes up from Harbison, division headquarters, for the questioning. Ken told the sheriff

that personally he mightn't be on hand. The sheriff said he would keep in touch with Ken in the event a posse uncovered anything.

At two in the morning Ken headed back up the railroad alone and on foot. He walked rather rapidly for two miles, then slowed his pace, examining the gravel as he went. His eyes scanned the embankment on either side of the single track of the main line, his flash light glare darting back and forth in the heavy blackness of the mountain morning.

He had traversed another two miles in this fashion when he brought up suddenly, wheeled and scrambled down to the ditch on the south side of the tracks.

"Looks like I'm getting a break," he mumbled, half to himself, his torch playing over a section crew's push car—a flanged wheel contraption such as section men use to push ties around on. Ken bent over the upturned equipment, made a note of the wheels.

Wham!

A bullet sang dangerously close to his head on the sharp bark of a gun at his back. His torch slipped from his fingers; he turned, dropped flat and lay listening, scarcely breathing.

That had been close! A thousand things raced through his mind as he strained to hear what he believed was a stealthy approach. He was face down in the weeds now, the cold biting his water-soaked legs. He brought his .45 from his thigh holster, reached his arm around ahead of him, the revolver concealed in the weeds, but ready for instant action.

The waiting seemed endless. Then a sound broke ahead of him, and suddenly a ray of light played upon him. Through half closed eyes he saw a heavy revolver poked toward him.

An evil laugh cut the stillness — a low gloating chuckle.

"Gawd!" said a throaty voice. "Got him right smack—"

Ken's gun blazed in the weeds, the voice died in a gurgle, the torch slipped to the ground and Ken heard a heavy thud in the ditch. He waited another moment or two, then, recovering his own flash light, he got to his feet, crept forward, gun trained on the slumped bulk.

The lifeless face that looked up at Ken was dark, hawklike in features.

"Well," Ken mumbled under his breath, "somebody sure as hell was interested in this little push car."

Rapidly he searched his victim, but found nothing except some cartridge shells. Ken took the dead man's revolver, slipped it into his coat pocket, and headed back to Sentinel Butte station.

It was close to four when he raised the sheriff, told the little fellow where he'd find another body, and asked the sheriff to try to identify it, but keep it under cover.

"Mebbe he got the loot you said the old operator—"

"Not on your life," Ken replied. "Sorry I killed him, but it was one or the other of us."

The sheriff promised to see if he could learn the identity of the man, and Ken was barely in time to catch a Pullman in No. 2 as the varnished shot rolled east toward Harbison. Ken gave the porter his soaked clothing, took the berth the conductor had found for him, and proceeded to drop into a sound sleep.

Nor did he awaken until the porter shook him ten minutes out of Harbison. The colored gent hadn't been able to do much about drying out the garments, but Ken tipped him liberally.

He felt somewhat refreshed, planted himself on a forward seat to try to make up his mind on his next step.

Ken reached his room at ten o'clock, got into some dry clothes, filled a pipe and lit it. He sank to his bed, blowing smoke clouds at the ceiling. Mentally he went over carefully every single incident of the night before, step by step. Then suddenly he sat bolt upright.

"Damn!" He leaped to his feet, clinging fast to the thought which had come to him. He raced to the telephone, called the chief dispatcher and inquired the name and address of the man who had been on duty on the train wire between the hours of four and midnight.

"Why didn't I think of that before?" he asked himself as he grabbed up his coat and hat. "Dumb! Those finger-prints wiped off that rubber key button at Spire. Darkes never reported Extra 3434 by at 7.04. Probably never left the cinders after I saw him alive."

The address which Ken had secured from the chief dispatcher was less than three blocks away—a modest little cottage on a side street. A woman answered his knock, and his request brought a slight, gray-haired man to the door. Ken gave his name, explained that he wanted to ask a question or two in connection with a main line investigation.

"Just step right in, sir," said the man. "Have a seat."

Ken took an old-fashioned chair. His host sat down rather nervously.

"You were on duty last night about the time Darkes was murdered?"

The man nodded.

"Terrible thing, wasn't it?" he said.

"Notice anything peculiar on the train wire at that time?" Ken pressed. "Spire reported Extra 3434 East by?"

"Why, yes. The station reported the extra by, but I don't know—"

"That was around five after seven," Ken cut in. "Now you've worked with Old Darkes enough years to know his sending pretty well, haven't you?"

"Yes. He had a glass arm style—sort of trembly, and not always clear."

"Think hard now," said Ken rapidly. "Could you swear it was Darkes who gave you the report on the extra? Was it his sending?"

"Hell!" said the little man. "Now that you mention it I did notice it was pretty sharp for Darkes—say! Now, what do you know! Yessir! I remember now. It wasn't the old feller's touch."

"But you thought nothing of it at the time—didn't even make a mental note of it?"

"Why—why, no. Fact is, only you mentioning it, that's all I—"

"What time was it you called Darkes and failed to get an answer?"

"Well, that extra," the little man answered, "rolled by around 7.04. I wanted to put out an order at Spire to 1st 94, and I guess I started calling Darkes about 7.10. It was five minutes, maybe, then I got to wondering if maybe he went out. So I called Homestead, and caught 1st 94 there before it started down the mountain."

"And you also told 1st 94's engine crew to look out for any sign of trouble," said Ken, leaning forward in his chair.

"Yessir. It began to seem funny to me Darkes wouldn't answer. You know, I thought maybe he might be sick. He was getting along in years."

Ken brought the questioning to an abrupt close and raced for his office, a small room at the end of the hall on the second floor of the Harbison passenger station.

From a drawer of his desk he took a magnifying glass, trained it on the train report sheet he had taken from the Spire office. He frowned deeply as his keen eyes sought out signs invisible, then grunted with satisfaction. A grim smile played around his stern lips.

"Now we're getting somewhere," he told himself.

Down the hall he entered the office of Mayhew, the division superintendent. The girl said the boss was alone. Ken walked through the door marked "Private." Mayhew, bushy-browed, heavy-jowled, looked up.

"Good Lord!" said the super in a rumbling voice, "I thought I'd never hear from you. Here I've been burning up the wires trying to get a line on you and this mess at Spire, and all I could get was some dope from Sentinel Butte that you'd caught No. 2 in this morning. I've even had a messenger trying to run you down."

"I thought that might be the case," Ken replied, sinking into a chair. "And I knew you'd be full of questions. But let me do a little asking first while I've got a hot idea."

"Shoot," said Mayhew, folding his hands over his thick middle.

"In the first place, did you get that 94's engine crew and the train crew of the extra 3434 off to Sentinel Butte to appear at the inquest?"

"Got 'em all rounded up," said the super. "They'll be leaving at 11.45 on No. 223."

"Good," said Ken. "How about going along up there?"

"Me? What for?"

"We might develop something interesting," Ken returned. "And in the meantime I'd like to have your girl get me some personal record files. I want to look into some people."

"Sure," said the super. He pressed a buzzer. "You got an idea on this killing?"

"I've got a couple good ones," said Ken.

The girl came in and Ken handed her a slip on which he'd written some names. He asked her to give him the files.

"What you driving at?" the super pressed as the girl went out.

"One thing," Ken replied, "is that I've got to get back to Sentinel Butte telegraph office right away. Got to get there on 223. Will you come?"

Mayhew frowned, looked at his watch and then up at Ken. Without answering he reached for the telephone. A moment later he spat a terse order to the yardmaster to have his business car brought down to the platform.

IV

KEN sat in a deep chair in Mayhew's private car as the train bowled westward over the Montana scenery. Before him on his lap were the personal record files he'd asked for. Mayhew watched him while he studied the application blanks, the signatures, the other material. Ken then took a pad and figured rapidly. After a little he paused, looked moodily out the window

"Well, I'm waiting to be enlightened," said Mayhew in that rumbling voice, "what's the dope?"

"It's like I figured," said Ken at length. "Old Darkes was pretty much of a mystery himself. His record shows he was hired more than twelve years ago, during a rush season, and sent to Spire. He gave three railroads as references on his past record. These references came back no good. The roads had never heard of Darkes. The

old fellow, however, wasn't disturbed. I imagine it was pretty hard, in those days, to keep a man at Spire."

"I know it was," said Mayhew. "A desolate place like that. Hell, you put a young man there and he'd blow the job in less than a month."

"Darkes got just what he wanted when he got that post," said Ken. "I went into his cabin pretty thoroughly, and if he was hiding his identity he certainly succeeded. Not a trace of even a living relative. No record of a single friend on this division. Then here. Look at these figures. More than $14,000 paid him in cash over these years. No one to spend it on. He apparently sent it to no one. What was he doing with that money, twenty miles from the nearest place where he could even spend a nickel on chewing tobacco? He was hoarding it, keeping it in that old mattress. For what reason we probably won't ever learn.

"But somebody who knew Darkes years ago, knew pretty well what his habits were, finally tracked that old codger down. Learned he'd been on this railroad all this time, and knew exactly what Darkes had been doing with his earnings. Maybe that man had a grudge against Darkes. We'll find out about that.

"The stranger—this man who knew Darkes—rode into Spire last night on Extra 3434 East. This stranger shot down the old man in cold blood, killed Cling, who perhaps had seen something suspicious and had dropped off the extra to see what was up, then escaped on the same train."

"You mean on this extra?" Mayhew leaned forward. "Hell, Ken, that drag didn't stop at Spire. You know—"

"I know it," Ken cut in; "but you must remember Extra 3434 took an hour and a half with a hundred cars in the train, to ease down that twenty miles from Spire, and the man who committed this murder, after he had secured what he was after, reported the train by the station, wiped all traces of finger-prints off the key he'd used, entered the record on the sheet of the time, and then followed the extra's rear end down on a section crew's push car until he was close enough to ditch the car and run and catch up with the train."

"And then what?" Mayhew bit deeply into his dead cigar.

"Well, that's about all," Ken replied, "except the murderer had a partner planted somewhere on that mountain to make off with the push car when it was safe to do so. Probably put it back on the rails and run it into Sentinel Butte, which would have been easy. Only I went poking out there along the track and almost got my head shot off."

"How about the partner?" Mayhew asked.

"There isn't much chance of us knowing anything from that source," said Ken. "Poor devil. I thought he had me, and I shot at his flash light from the weeds. Finished him."

"Unh!" grunted Mayhew.

Ken said nothing, eyes fixed on the landscape.

"And don't you think there's a big chance that this murderer has got plumb away?" Mayhew asked after a pause. "Seems like maybe you should have stayed at Sentinel Butte or—"

"I think there's a big chance that this murderer, who is a telegraph operator, isn't making any effort to get away—not until the murder of Old Darkes has blown completely over. No, sir, boss, the man who killed Darkes and Cling is clever and—dangerous."

"You got a suspicion of any—"

"Let's play dominoes or something," Ken interrupted. "We'd better wait until the inquest is over before I make any further statements."

Mayhew knew Ken Littlefield well enough to know that Ken was through with talking about the murder at Spire for the time being.

No. 223 stopped at Sentinel Butte at 4.45 that afternoon. Ken Littlefield dropped from the steps of the car while the train was still rolling, saw the sheriff, and spoke a few words in a low voice. The sheriff nodded and Ken disappeared into the telegraph office.

The second trick operator—the man on duty from four to midnight—recognized Ken from the night before, and opened the door from the waiting room to admit Ken to the inner office.

"You got a file copy of the train orders issued last night to Extra 3434?" Ken demanded, eyes searching the platform through the smoky panes. People were unloading from the train.

"Yeh," said the operator. "Want 'em?"

Ken nodded. He was watching the engine crew of 1st 94 cross the platform. Then came the brakeman to whom he'd been talking on the top of the train, followed by Conductor Sam Glass and Joe Beecher, the hind man on the run. He saw the sheriff greet the engine crew, meet the others, and lead the group away. The yard engine had tied into the rear of 223, and was now pulling away with Mayhew's business car.

Ken turned to the operator. He was thumbing through a bunch of tissues on a spike. Shortly he paused, jerked the tissues off, and handed Ken three sheets of the flimsy. Two were form "19" on green tissue. These Ken discarded. The other was a form "31," the kind of an order that had to be signed for. This Ken took, examined closely, then placed in his pocket. He thanked the operator, got directions as to where to find the sheriff's office, and ambled up the street.

Ken's fingers moved toward his breast, felt confidently of the bulk in his shoulder holster. The tight, grim smile played around his mouth. He was feeling pretty good.

There was marked tensity evident to the ex-West Pointer as he slipped quietly into the office where the sheriff and the coroner were going through the formality of asking a lot of questions. Only the sheriff looked up as Ken entered. The others in the group had their backs to the door. Ken dropped into a chair to listen. Mayhew sat next to the sheriff.

Ken's sharp eyes drilled the men before him. He saw that Beecher, the hind man, was extremely nervous; Glass extremely calm. The other brakeman expressed no emotion. He was merely listening.

The engine crew told how they'd found the body. There wasn't much else for them to tell. The coroner made notes on a yellow pad. Finally the sheriff turned to the head man—the one Ken had been talking to when the train passed Spire. The head man answered without a falter. Yes, he'd seen Darkes alive. Somewhere around seven. Saw a lamp signal to the engine, then a slighter jerk in answer to his own wave.

"Didn't see nothin' peculiar?" the sheriff leaned forward.

"Nawsir," said the head man.

The sheriff turned to Beecher, who gave his name and his position. Ken noticed the catch in his thick voice, the nervous shifting of his feet. The man was crumpling his soft hat.

"An' where was you when your train passed Spire?" the sheriff queried.

"I was ridin' on top, maybe twenty cars ahead of the caboose," said Beecher, and he sounded as though his throat had tightened.

"An' did you see Darkes?"

"We-well, I seen him, yessir," the man faltered.

"Was he—did he look like he was alive to you?"

"Wh-why, I guess so," said Beecher. "I—I didn't pay no attention, much. I know I seen him standin' there with his lamp. Kinda blurred like, on account of the mist."

The sheriff paused, looked about the group, then turned to Glass.

"Conductor, wasn't you?"

"On the extra, yeh," answered Glass. Ken noted the hard, metallic quality of the voice.

"Where was you when the train passed Spire?"

"Ridin' the cupola in the caboose"

"An' did you notice Darkes?" the sheriff was gazing hard at the boomer conductor.

"Only I seen him wave a highball to me," the conductor said.

"What's that?"

"Why, it's a lamp signal," Glass explained. "Operators are made to stand in front of their station when a train passes an' watch the train for anything like hot boxes, or draggin' brake riggin' or swingin' doors, an' give a sign to the hind end if anything's wrong, or a highball if everything's in order."

"An' this here highball," said the sheriff. "That meant your train was all right?"

"Yeh," returned Glass.

The sheriff looked up. Ken caught his eye, narrowed his lids, nodded to the group. The sheriff nodded back.

"Beecher!"

Ken's voice cracked like a whip. The hind man came halfway out of his chair. Those in the room turned, stared at Ken as he fixed Beecher with his piercing gaze.

"Beecher, you just said you didn't pay particular attention to Darkes when you went by." Ken walked around until he faced the men.

"N-nawsir. I didn't. Didn't pay no attention to him." Ken saw the hind man's eyes cloud, widen.

"Isn't it a fact, Beecher, that you knew Old Darkes pretty well?"

"Wh-why, I never. Nawsir. I never."

"Haven't you talked with him at times when you happened to be stopped there?" Ken's fire was rather merciless.

"Nawsir. Never. That old fool wouldn't never talk to no one."

"Mr. Glass"—Ken turned to the man next to the brakeman—"have you ever seen this brakeman in conversation with Old Darkes?"

A peculiar smile played around the corners of Glass's thin lips.

"Why, since you mention it, I have. Yeh. I have."

"Ever notice, by any chance that Beecher was kind of inquisitive in the way he'd look about that office whenever you stopped there?"

"Yeh. I believe—"

"It's a damn' lie!" shouted the hind man, leaping to his feet. "You ain't gonna accuse me—"

"Be quiet, Beecher," Ken snapped "Nobody's accusing you. I'm merely trying to arrive at something, that's all. Aside from a double murder up there, a sum of money around $10,000 or better is missing. Now, I'm wondering, Glass, if by any chance Beecher could have dropped off that extra of

yours last night without you knowing it."

Beecher glared, speechless. Glass turned to his hind man, and his thin-lipped smile twisted. Ken watched both men closely.

"Yeh. That's possible," said Glass finally.

"And it's possible," Ken continued, "that if he did drop off there, he could have caught up with the train by using, say, a push car?"

Glass started, the smile dropped away, but only for a second.

"Yeh. I guess so."

This time when Beecher leaped he meant it. He landed on Glass, shouting. Ken separated them, forced Beecher back into his chair.

"That's all I want to know," Ken said to the sheriff. "You might hold Beecher until—"

"Honest to God," Beecher wailed. "Lissen! I ain't—"

But the sheriff was leading the big brakeman away, while the others rose uneasily—all except Conductor Sam Glass. He walked jauntily to the door.

V

"WHAT the hell's eating you?"

Mayhew asked this question of Ken Littlefield a few minutes later as the two sat in the private car on a spur near the passenger station. He was sore.

"You know damn' well Beecher never—"

"We'll find out some time after nine to-night," Ken said. "You ordered the engine and train crews back to Harbison on No. 18?"

"Yes," said Mayhew.

"Well, if I'm not mistaken, there's likely to be a party right after No. 18 goes. Want to sit in the telegraph office and see the show?"

Mayhew smiled grimly. In the days before his middle had got quite so thick, he'd been a fighter on the line, still could battle some.

"All right," said Ken. "You show up at the waiting room door to the office at nine. I'm going over to see the operator."

Ken Littlefield fingered the black butt of his revolver as he lurked in the shadows beyond the baggage room. No. 18 came in, picked up a few passengers. Ken watched closely to see the men from Harbison board the smoker, smiled grimly. No. 18 whistled out, picked up speed and shortly the red markers on the rear coach faded with distance. Then Ken saw the glow of light disappear from the waiting room. The operator was acting according to orders. Mayhew should be in the telegraph office now, and the operator should have before him a slip of paper on which Ken had penciled a brief message to the Harbison sheriff.

Ken skirted the building, now in total darkness save for the glow which trickled through the telegraph office windows to the platform. Around the side by the waiting room he crouched, waiting, listening. He could hear the muted instruments coming faintly through the darkness, an almost inaudible chatter. That, too, had been part of his plan.

Abruptly footfalls sounded on the platform, coming from the opposite direction. A man passed briefly in the glow from the office windows, walking rapidly. Ken drew up close to the wall. Then the waiting room door opened and the man passed inside. Ken sprang into action. Catlike he stalked to the door, not yet shut, caught it before it slammed, and eased inside. The man ahead of him was between him and the light coming through the ticket window, which was open.

At the window the man stopped, his sharp features dark and evil in the rays from the lamp inside. Ken's revolver came out, ready for instant action.

"I wanna look through your train order file," the man said as the operator came to the ticket window. "See about an order last—"

"Pardon me, just a minute," the operator replied. "Lemme finish with this wire an' I'll look up your—"

Then, loud and clear, above the dull chatter of the muted instruments, Ken heard the bark of a sharp sounder. He couldn't read code, but he knew that the operator was sending a message—terse words he himself had written.

Ken crouched, watched the face of the man at the window, saw the eyes narrow, the lower jaw drop. There was a movement, ever so slight, and then Ken Littlefield's voice shot through the room.

"Up with 'em, Glass," Ken called. "Up with 'em!"

In reply Sam Glass shot from the hip, reeling away from the light of the ticket window. Ken's .45 belched flame in the direction from which Glass's shot had come. The operator turned a switch, the lights came up in the waiting room, and at the same moment Sam Glass leaped, his gun jammed.

The Lights Came Up in the Waiting Room. Ken's Uppercut Snapped Back the Man's Head

It was a great fight while it lasted. Glass battled like a cornered rat; fought, bit, tore and clawed; but Ken Littlefield, ex-West Pointer, was hard. His fists tore mercilessly into Glass's

flesh while Mayhew looked on bewildered. Finally Ken's uppercut from the section of the knees, snapped back the conductor's head and he collapsed in a heap. Ken snapped a pair of bracelets on the wrists.

They took the man into the telegraph room, stretched him out on a table. The operator had called the sheriff at Ken's order, and now the little man, with Beecher in tow, came blustering in.

"Here's your prisoner, sheriff," said Ken. "Charge him with the murder of Old Darkes and Special Agent Cling. And Beecher, here. He ought to be rewarded. Too bad I had to make him the goat while I brought out Sam Glass at the hearing. But I won't forget it, Beecher."

The sheriff, however, wanted some explanations, and so did Mayhew.

"Lissen, Ken," the super said. "I know you've got a lot of brains, but—"

"It wasn't so hard," said Ken, as Glass, regaining consciousness, centered hard eyes on the under-cover man. "Not so hard. As I told you before, a telegraph operator who knew Darkes, knew his habits, killed him. Mr. Glass is going to tell us just where Cling fitted into the picture. But Mr. Glass, picking an opportune time, centered his attention on Darkes's money. And Mr. Glass escaped—almost without a trace. One thing he forgot, however, was that Darkes was left-handed. The smudged places on the train record sheet showed that. The man who committed the murder, hung up the body so it would look to a following train as if the old man were standing out there watching the train go by, and reported the extra to the dispatcher, was right-handed. The single smudge on the sheet shows that.

"Now I looked up Mr. Glass's personal record. He's been here two months, and we haven't had time to hear from his references. They may be no good. I studied his signature and his writing on his application blanks, and it was patently disguised. A close scrutiny under a microscope would show that fact plainly. Then I remembered that Mr. Glass seemed excited last night when I met him along the train, and it occurred to me that here might be a clew, so I chased all the way back here to-day with Mr. Mayhew to get hold of a '31' order that Glass had signed last night.

"When I saw the signature I knew Glass had been excited. That name was signed in the swinging, round script that makes it hard to tell one telegraph operator's handwriting from another's. He slipped there. Slightly. But he slipped. I took that copy of the order, and just figured that Mr. Glass would be doing a lot of wondering after he had seen his signature on the original which he possessed. Mr. Glass is very careful. He wanted to leave no clews behind, and as you both know, a man is dead because of the push car clew.

"So I reasoned that Glass would take his first chance to get the copy of that order from this file here. He'd want to destroy it. I also figured that if he were an operator, I could find another way of proving it. I wrote a fake message to the effect that the sheriff at Harbison should meet No. 18 to-night and arrest Glass on murder charges. The operator here sent the message in part as Mr. Glass stood at the ticket window. I saw him make a motion for his gun. You know the rest."

"Damn' clever of you," sneered the manacled man from the table. "Damn' clever of me to slip like I did."

"But now maybe you'll tell me about Cling?" Ken leaned down.

"Him?" Glass snorted. "A dumb bull. I don't hafta tell you nothin'. He just stuck his nose in when I was tryin' to get even with that dirty louse at Spire. Old Darkes, I mean, an' he was dirty, too. He gypped me in an oil deal fifteen years ago. Broke me, an' he knew if we ever met again it 'd be one or the other of us. I was there to collect. The bull just was unlucky to butt in, that's all."

"Take your man, sheriff," said Ken Then he turned to Mayhew. "I'm ready to hit the hay."

THE END

A THREAT TO THE TELEGRAPH

IS radio a threat to the telegraph? Will the telegraph systems of North America, representing an investment of millions of dollars, be eventually scrapped to give way to radio communication?

It may be looking with an eye far into the future, but such a possibility was forecasted in a recent performance of the Canadian National Railways at Regina, Saskatchewan, during the height of a Western sleet storm which caused widespread havoc on the railway's telegraph system.

The feat was performed in conjunction with the two radio stations, CKCK and CHWC, located at Regina.

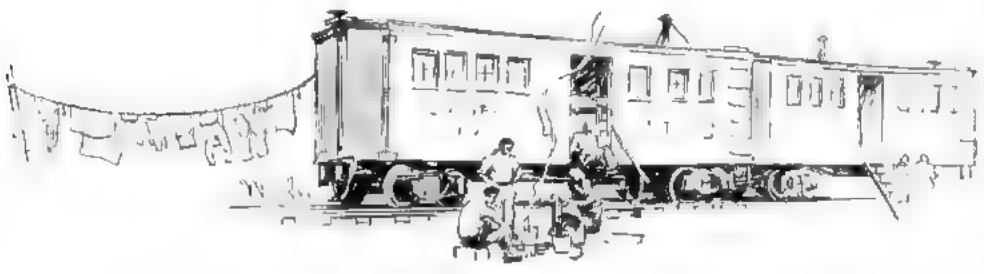
During the storm the railways operated a freight train south from Regina to Northgate, on the North Dakota border, a distance of 150 miles. At Lampman, the last open station, the train crew were given orders that on their arrival at Northgate they were to return to Regina "light" as there was no traffic at Northgate for the return trip.

Following the departure from Lampman, the wires between that point and Northgate failed. They had buckled under the strain of the sleet storm. Telegraph communication between Regina and Northgate was rendered impossible. To make difficulties worse, the chief dispatcher at Regina received word that the Great Northern Railway was delivering to the Canadian National at Northgate, a train of loaded tanks on the following morning, destined for Regina.

No message could be sent to the agent at Northgate to hold the Canadian National engine until the next day in order to pick up the oil train for Regina. All roundabout means of communication with Northgate was useless—the sleet had isolated the little border terminal.

It was a dilemma for the Regina chief dispatcher, but the radio solved it. The chief remembered that the agent at Northgate owned a radio set, so he got in touch with the radio stations CKCK and CHWC and the necessary train orders, directing the Canadian National crew to wait at Northgate for the arrival of the Great Northern's oil train, were broadcast from these radio stations.

It was a chance, but it was successful. The Northgate man was listening in on his radio set. He got the train orders. The result was that the Canadian National train was held until the load of forty-three tanks arrived next morning. This saved much valuable time and unnecessary train operation costs, which are vitally important to the efficient management of any railroad.



The Fireman Watched the Old Man with a Curious, Questioning Expression

An Indefinite Leave of Absence

The Last of the Old Timers Could Not Resist Forever the Upward March of Younger Men

By Don Waters

THE high-wheeled passenger engine was driving fast through the wet night, its exhaust a swishing roar out the short, stubby stack as it hauled up the grade. Old Bud Thompson, the engineer, leaned out the cab window, unmindful of the rain.

Half a mile in front the crisscross steel structure of a signal bridge showed mistily in the headlight's glare through the falling rain. The hazy blob of color on the banjo target of the block signal blinked, changed.

"What's she say now?" he called doubtfully across the cab to his fireman. "What's she say now?"

Above the shuffle of the exhaust and the *rat-a-tat* of drivers rapping the rail joints, above the thump of the rods and the shrill squeal of the headlight's turbine, the fireman yelled back: "Let her roll, cap'n! She's gone green as grass."

Bud nodded, looked again at that colored disk, blurred and indistinct, glowing through the rain; passed his gloved hand across his eyes with a

motion as though he were brushing something from them.

"Green she is," he muttered in a low voice. "I see it now."

The engine plunged past under the signal bridge, jolted, swayed as the drivers took the pitch of a curve. Bud looked back at the long train stretched out behind on the bend. Express and baggage, mail and sleeper, diner and observation car, fifteen heavy steel coaches trailed through the wet night, led on by the monotonous shuffle of 933's exhaust, following the beam of her headlight that straightened out around the curve, shimmered on the burnished steel rail treads, lit up the rows of telegraph wires alongside the right of way whose wet insulators glinted like jewels.

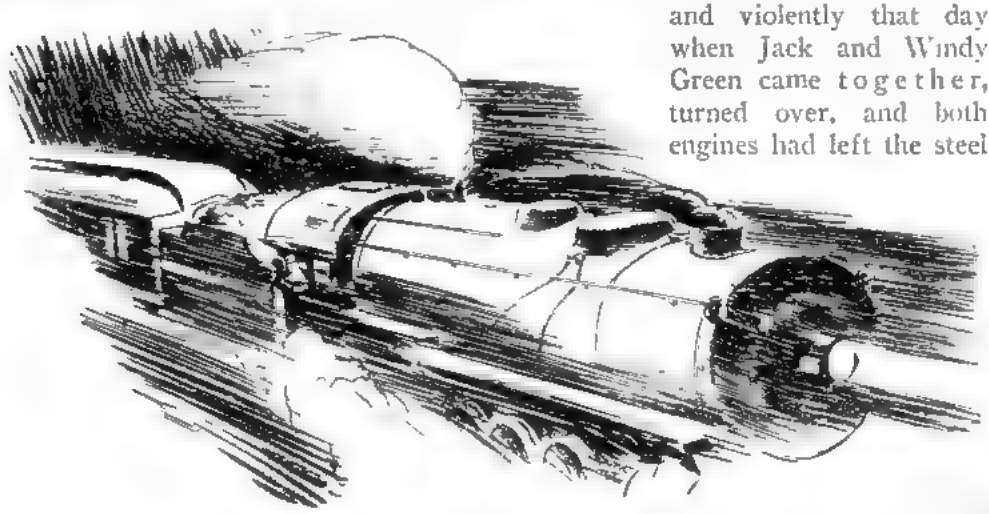
Old Bud Thompson widened out a notch on the throttle, squared his shoulders. An expression of pride crossed his worn and wrinkled face. No. 11 was a crack train, the best run on the division, and the 933 was one of the finest engines on the whole road. Her front end was brass-trimmed, her headlight case burnished copper. Her cylinder head covers were nickel-plated, her side and main rods buffed and polished. He'd spent many a dollar of his own money on her, trimming her up, and spent many an hour of his spare time between runs keeping her spick and span. An enviable position, this he held; he was an aristocrat of the laboring world, engineer on a first-class passenger train, driving an engine that was the show locomotive of the division.

As the 933 plunged roaring through the night with swinging rods and plunging pistons, her spinning drivers shoving the steel behind her, Old Bud Thompson's thoughts ranged back over the path he had traveled which had brought him to the right-hand side of the cab on a first-class passenger train. Forty years—four decades—ago he had started railroading. There were no Mikados nor Mallets then, no superheaters nor compounds, nothing but little sixteen-inch cylinder, copper-flued, wide-stacked wood burners. There were no automatic block signals, nor pocket couplers. It was amazing to think of the things that had come onto the railroad since he had. The link and pin couplers were gone; the hand brakes were no more. The butt end switches—he smiled a bit at the remembrance of them. There probably wasn't one man out of ten on the division to-day who had even seen them. And the wood burners were long vanished. In their places were high-wheeled, fast passenger engines and ponderous freight locomotives that could take a dozen of those old-time trains behind them, engines and all, and then not have half a load. Big, coal-eating whales on wheels, they were.

A white board standing alongside the right of way flashed past. Automatically his hand swept over his head. He caught the whistle cord and blew a lilting crossing blow, two longs and two shorts; a sweet sound to him, the big melodious chime whistle that boomed low, raised its tone smoothly to a far-reaching, piercing note which carried for miles. He could almost play a tune on this whistle, his own, not like the flat, squalling things that were regular equipment on the company's engines.

He remembered, at the safety first meeting last Sunday, how some young efficiency engineer had given them a talk on whistle signals, said the crossing blow was all wrong, said the two longs should come last so that the more imperative, drawn-out blast would

occur nearer to the crossing. Bud grinned; he'd got up and told that fellow—raised a laugh, he had—informed him that any one in an automobile within ten miles who couldn't hear the 933's whistle was either drunk or deaf. Told him the first time he'd opened up on it, it had lifted the top clear off of a machine running on the highway alongside.



He Caught the Whistle Cord and Blew a Lilting Crossing Blow

Old Thompson's grin faded. Automobiles reached tremendous speeds on the roads nowadays. They had become quite a menace at the grade crossings They ran as fast as the trains, often faster. He had no automobiles to contend with when he had first gone to slinging cord wood into the brick arch firebox of a wood burner. Strenuous days those, a man sure had to be a hard hitter to get by. One by one, he recalled the fellows who had been on the road when he started. Dim and legendary they were, unknown by this generation, almost forgotten by their own. There was big Jack Shannahan, who had driven his engine over Bear Run trestle all aflame, carried the people from the town above to safety during the big fire that had swept across the timber country in the eighties. Jack was gone, twenty years ago. He'd got his in a smash-up on the mountain. There had been several of the old timers gone out suddenly and violently that day when Jack and Windy Green came together, turned over, and both engines had left the steel and rolled a couple of hundred yards down the embankment. The dispatcher who had pulled the boner was beyond the reach of a call boy when they started the investigation, for he had acknowledged his error by the simple expedient of sticking a gun barrel in his ear and blowing his brains out

"Hard hitters, those fellows," Old Bud Thompson muttered, peering querulously at the steam gauge.

Other names flashed through the old man's mind, fellows who had met head on, or driven into the rears of standing trains. A boiler explosion, a broken rail, a misunderstood train order, and the crews riding the engines one after another, finished their last trips, finished them in the rip and clang of ruptured steel, the shrieking hiss of live steam, the crunch and smash of splintered wood.

Bud's expression grew thoughtful. He passed his hand across his eyes subconsciously. By George, it came over him then! He was the last of the old timers running. The others? Why, they were no more on the call list. A new generation had taken their place, a generation that knew nothing whatever of those hard-fighting, hard-drinking, hell-raising days when the railroad was pioneering.

From across the cab his fireman called: "She's gone yellow on us! I expect 84 has entered the block ahead."

At the sound of his fireman's voice, Bud Thompson abruptly jerked himself out of his reverie. The rattle and bang of the jolting, running engine that he had heard unhearing for the past few minutes, he was conscious of it now. The rumbling roar of the exhaust, the low pound of the brasses, the thump of shoes and wedges, the whine of the headlight turbine, the *rat-a-tat* of drivers pounding the rail joints, all blended into a chorus that he knew full well, knew and loved. He looked ahead to where, on his side of the track, the round disk of a light showed an indistinct greasy smear through the falling rain. He had a meet order with No. 84. He strained his eyes, leaned far out of the cab, could see no sign of her. He pulled the leather thong looped into his watch, held the face of the watch slanting toward the water-glass light, peered hard at the hands for a few seconds. He was on time at the meeting point.

II

The 84 was a fast freight. Young Bud Thompson, his son, had her to-night. It was almost unbelievable that Buddy was on her. Why, it seemed just like yesterday when his boy was pulling a string of tin cars around the kitchen floor. And now Buddy was a man grown, had gone through college and come on the railroad. Buddy was a hoghead; he'd learned the road, gone to firing, stuck to the gruelling round of slice bar and scoop, went up for examination three years ago, and now he had the "age" to hold a regular run.

Old Bud Thompson rubbed his gloved hand across his eyes with a motion that had become a habit. They were bothering him to-night, burned like fire. He'd been having trouble with them ever since that time the water glass had blown out on the 933 a couple of months ago. He'd got a good dose of hot steam then. He felt the side of his face, a little tender yet, where he'd been burned that time. He shoved the watch back into his pocket. On time, Buddy was, trust him for that. Buddy was a highball artist. He had his faults, he was reckless, a bit careless about orders, a little scornful of the book of rules, but no loafer on the road. He'd get his train across the division on the schedule if any one could. He knew the tricks, his son did.

Old Bud grinned reminiscently. "Highball" Bud the division called him, his own nickname that he had not heard applied to himself for a decade; Highball Bud.

"And now," he muttered, "he's gettin' his age on him. He's a comin' into his seniority, and me who used to be Highball Bud, I'm agoin' out."

But at that, he had the satisfaction of knowing that there were few of the tricks he'd learned that young Bud didn't know. He'd passed on the knowledge he'd gleaned through four decades of pounding the rails to his son. Old Man Thompson's smile widened into a broad grin at the thought; Bud had taken them all in and added a few

of his own. No wonder his son was Highball Bud.

The fireman across the cab called: "Here's the sidin', cap'n, an' I see 84's light a comin'."

Bud jammed the throttle closed. The bellow of the exhaust died with the motion. He dropped his reverse lever down into the front corner of the quadrant. As a switch light streaked past him he applied the air. Back along his train the brake shoes clamped on the spinning wheels, dragged the train to a stop. From ahead came the sound of a locomotive's whistle. He pulled the reverse lever up into the center of the quadrant, stared ahead through the narrow wet glass of the panel of his cab door.

He nodded, "Yep, she's a comin' all right."

Reaching up over his head he pulled the switch, cut off his own headlight. He turned on the cab light above him, pulled a paper from his inside jumper pocket, unfolded it. With a guilty expression on his face he took out a black leather case, opened it, notched on a pair of glasses, and slowly, methodically, read the paper through. His face was grave, his eyes abstracted as he carefully folded it up and put it back, and hurriedly shoved his glasses into the case, snapped it closed and pushed it into his pocket after the paper. The fireman sit-

Strange How Those Fellows He Knew in the Long Ago Seemed Close to Him To-night

ting on the opposite seatbox watched the old man under lowered lids with a curious, questioning expression. He started to speak, changed his mind and sat gazing ahead to where the light from the approaching engine shone like a living silver bar, streaked across by slanting raindrops.

Bud Thompson sat on his seatbox while No. 84 approached, listening to the rain on the steel roof of the cab; sat hunched over, an expression of worry on his worn, tired face. Again his mind reverted to the days that were gone, when there were no sixteen-hour laws to limit a run, nor safety-appliance acts to safeguard a railroader's life Strange how those fellows he knew in the long ago seemed close and near to him to-night. One by one he recalled them. The day when his conductor had got his hand nipped with a link and pin coupler seemed like yesterday, and it was over a quarter of a century ago. That other time when he turned over and lay pinned for six hours under the engine before they got him out; he gasped at the dim and half-remembered recollection. Why, he was not yet thirty then. Buddy's age, and that was before Buddy had been born! They sure had wrecks frequently then; there were generally a dozen or more railroaders laid up hurt all the time in the hospital or at home.

He contrasted those times with the present and somehow, some way, in spite of all the grief and worry, all the work and struggle that went with them, he almost felt as though those times were better. There were no efficiency engineers, no doctor's examinations nor safety first movements, but there was a humanness about railroading then. Men made their own rules to fit the occasion, and a man who held a job running an engine was a person of importance. The superintendent knew every man on the division, and would sit down and take a drink with any he happened to meet on the road. Imagine a hoghead offering the present superintendent a drink on duty!

The old colonel was gone fifteen years now, and others had taken his place. They only lasted a couple of years each. Some couldn't produce the goods, and left without warning. Others made good and went to better jobs. This last fellow; he'd only been there a few months. He was one of those sticklers for the rules. He'd bumped off a lot of the old heads on one pretext or the other, and now Bud felt the crinkle of the paper in his inside jumper pocket. An old man had little chance. It was becoming a young man's game, railroading to-day.

Looking ahead, he saw the approaching freight train slow down to a walk. A brakeman with bobbing lantern ran in front, threw the switch off the main line, headed it into the siding. The freight engine clattered over the switch. As it passed its pops opened with a roaring growl. Bud Thompson looked up, waved his hand to the young man who sat behind the reverse lever quadrant on the other locomotive. The engineer on the freight waved back. His father saw young Bud step down from the seatbox platform. He knew his son was going to drop off for a few words with him and let his fireman run up the siding and stop. The freight clattered past, car after car. The caboose cleared the switch ahead of the 933, stopped. Young Bud Thompson climbed up into his father's cab.

"Hey-ho, pap! How's she comin'?" he asked in a genial voice.

His father surveyed him for a mo-

ment before answering. A big broad-shouldered, red-haired young man stood on the deck of the 933, smiling, with a quizzical gleam in his light blue eyes. There was a reckless, devil-may-care expression on his face, the expression of one who would take a long chance for the fun of the taking.

Old Man Thompson shook his head, waved a warning finger at him.

"Now, Buddy," he said reprovingly, "you better take care. You know the new super has just posted a bulletin ag'in' any one but the shop machinists a settin' the pops. Says it's a gonna be a firin' offense. And they got a new road foreman o' engines now. I hear he's a ridin' up and down the division, a lookin' for trouble. If he catches you it'll be a lot o' grief. And as your jack passed I heard her pops open. They sounded pretty sharp to me. What you carryin' on 'em to-night?"

The son laughed good-naturedly. "Oh, I don't know. I screwed 'em down to a couple o' hundred pounds more or less, I reckon."

Bud reached across, shook his son's hand. "I suppose it's no use o' me tellin' you to be careful, Buddy, so run along. I'll be a seein' you when I get back."

The older man paused, a flush spread over his face. "I—mebbe I'll have plenty time then," he concluded in a low voice.

But the son missed the import of those words. "I just dropped off, pap, to tell you to take it easy beyond Summit for ten miles on the fills. They're slidin' a bit. I got a heavy drag; I shook 'em up quite a lot. I was ten minutes ahead o' schedule, but now I'm right on it."

His good-humored grin faded from his face. He gazed closely at his father.

"How's your eyes to-night, pap?" he asked, a note of concern in his voice.

Bud waved a hand in a deprecating gesture. "Fine as silk, Buddy. They're a comin' all right."

Yet Old Bud Thompson's words lacked conviction. A shadow crossed the son's face. Bud noticed it, and, as though to terminate an unpleasant subject, he pulled out his watch.

"Well, so long, Buddy," he announced. "If I got to take it slow beyond Summit, I can't waste much time myself to-night."

He looked back toward the caboose standing on the siding just behind the 933's tender. With a series of rattling thumps as coupler after coupler stretched out, the freight started.

"You'd better be a hoppin', Buddy."

"Well, so long, pap!" Buddy called, sliding down the grab irons. "I've got to leave. My fireboy is pullin' the string. I'd better get up in front."

He hurried along between the two trains, half running. Old Bud Thompson looked back, watching his son, an expression of anxious affection on his face. He could see him in the light from the station lamps, climbing up the side ladder on a box car. He shook his head ruefully.

"Takin' a chance again," he muttered.

The tops were wet and slippery to-night. Buddy would have to move fast to get up to the engine before his train reached the tunnel a couple of miles farther down the road

III

THEN Old Thompson's attention was suddenly distracted by a loud, frantic yell. Through the open door of the station the operator dashed out in his shirt sleeves, bareheaded, the

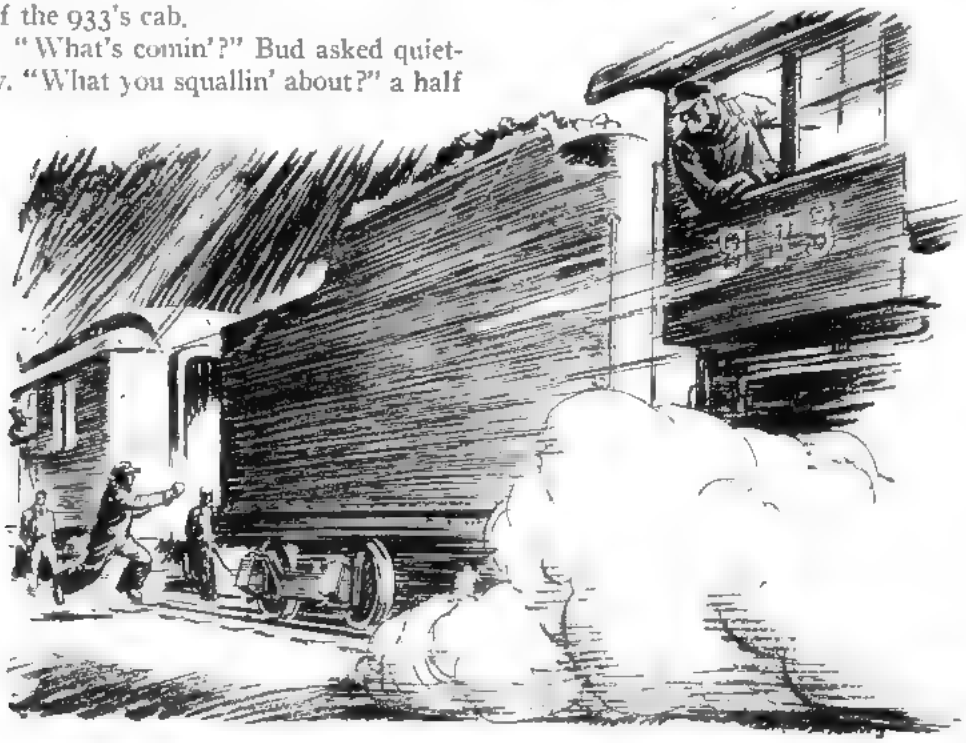
green eye shade on his forehead all awry. He was shouting:

"They're coming, they're coming! They just wired from Summit!" Frantically he waved his arms in a futile stop signal. "They're coming down the hill!" he called in a high-pitched voice, sprinting up to the side of the 933's cab.

"What's comin'?" Bud asked quietly. "What you squallin' about?" a half grin on his face that was wiped away a moment later when the operator screeched:

"String o' cars, steel and rock for the construction gang working on top of the hill! Air leaked off! They ran down the siding, split the switch and got away down the main line before any one noticed them! They had just set 'em off 84. They'll be here any minute! Get in the clear, get in the clear!"

Old Bud quickly looked back at the freight train slowly pulling along the siding. He saw his son, on top of a car, stop. Evidently the young man had heard the operator's excited yells without catching their import. With a rapid calculation, Old Bud Thompson knew that there was but one way to prevent that runaway string from hitting his train. He did not hesitate at that way.



Bud Saw a Man Running, Reaching for the Rear End of the Tank

There was a hard metallic ring in his voice when he commanded the fireman: "Come on, let's cut the 933 off!"

"What you gonna do?" the fireman asked incredulously.

Bud Thompson had no time for explanations then, for he had seen his son starting down the side ladder, just a passing glimpse before he vanished out of the circle of light from the depot.

"Cut me off on your side!" Bud snarled. "And get a curve on you."

The fireman, startled at that harsh command, obeyed.

Old Bud slid down the grab irons, and with the operator on one side and the fireman on the other, disconnected within half a minute the air and signal hose, steam line and safety links. In a couple of long leaps Bud Thompson reached the grab irons between engine and tank, slung himself aboard, looked back. His suspicions that Buddy had heard the operator proved true. Just a couple of car lengths back he caught sight of him running fast toward the engine.

As he twirled the sander valve he heard Buddy yell: "What's up?"

He did not hear the reply, for with his foot against the boiler head, he flung the reverse lever rattling over the notches down into the front corner of the quadrant, jerked the throttle. With a fluttering roar, a cascade of sparks skyrocketing out her stack, a clattering chatter when her drivers slipped on the grit-strewn steel, the 933 took hold, and with a leap left her train.

Old Bud looked back. He saw a man running, reaching for the back end of the tender, saw his outstretched hand miss by a scant six inches. He had won free. This was no chance for Young Bud, who loved to take chances for the fun of the taking. This was a certainty. At the end of this run—

Calm and unhurried, Old Man Thompson widened out on the throttle, flipped the headlight switch above his head and looked along the glittering path of silver that cut clear and sharp through the rain-filled darkness. The exhaust changed its tempo as he notched the reverse lever up, became a heavy fluttering roar. The 933 was running fast. Bud Thompson smiled to himself. He'd beat Buddy out, then. This was a situation where there was little time to waste. Seconds counted. There had been no chance to shove the freight up ahead, back the passenger down the main line and let the freight take the shock of that string coming. This was the only way. It was just five miles to the top of the hill; those cars would soon be down. If they were to strike his train it would be a bad smash-up. But they'd never strike it. He'd prevent that; he'd stop them, stop them alone.

The 84's crew would get the blame for this. Of course the conductor would have to stand the brunt of it, but—the old engineer shook his head—Buddy had been in quite a few jams. The new superintendent might take this as a fine opportunity to discharge the whole train crew. That was a bad siding they were working on up there at the top of the hill. It lay on a heavy grade. The train crews had strict orders never to leave anything standing there unless the derailers were flipped over the rails, but evidently they had neglected to do that to-night. Too much trouble out in the rain to fool with them

The locomotive jolted hard as the wheels struck a curve, jolted, lifted, then settled down with a loud clang. Bud Thompson nodded.

"Yep, yep, this'll square him all right," he muttered in a satisfied tone. "And me too."

He leaned out the window, looked ahead. A block signal light showed. He gazed hard at it, his eyes squinting. Couldn't quite make it out. He was almost beside it before he saw that the disk was red. He reached for a little brass valve that was hooked up above his brake valve, flipped it over:

the dead man control, another one of their new tricks. If an engineer ran by a red board without flipping that handle and jumping the control, automatically an electrical device alongside the tracks would set the air on the engine and bring the train to a stop.

The 933 was wide open now, running full speed up the hill. *Cut-a-chee! Cut-a-chee!* Heavy and regular, its swishing exhaust beat like a drum roll on the night. Bud gazed at his steam gauge. The white figures on the black dial looked a mere blur to him, the position of the hand uncertain. He reached into his pocket for his glasses, then realized that it made no difference. He had enough steam for the work he had to do.

Leaning far out of the window, he looked ahead. For a brief instant his face paled. Five hundred yards away up around a right-hand curve, outlined against the red clay wall of the mountainside, a black shadow streaked along fast coming toward him. The temptation to shut off, slap on the air, unload, was strong on him. He had done what he started out to do. That string of wild cars could never hit the passenger train now.

To unload, and for what? Even if he wasn't killed when he got off, he'd be hurt bad, certain. Months in the hospital, maybe crippled for the rest of his life—a nice prospect, that. A cripple, an object of pity. Not he. He wanted no sympathy. He thought of the pathetic, pitiful old-timers who had lost out in the last six months, sitting around the pool room, hanging around the shops, loafing at the passenger depot, watching their trains come in, living in the past, their trembling hands itching for the feel of a throttle grip warm in their grasp, hoping that something would turn up to put them back again on the jobs they had spent a lifetime to gain.

This new superintendent never missed a bet to get rid of one of the old heads. Clever trick that of his, to send them up for a physical examination, knowing full well they couldn't pass. Not him, not Bud Thompson. He'd go on out, but he'd leave another behind him. Buddy would carry on, and Old Bud Thompson would be running an engine as long as Young Bud pulled a throttle

Like swift-moving flashes, events and scenes jumped out of the limbo of the past, clear-cut, living pictures. Bud Thompson, who'd pulled the first coal burner on the division, red-headed Bud, ready for a fight or a frolic, broad-shouldered, strong as a bull he was those days, didn't know his own strength. The streak of caution had been left out of his make-up. Then Highball Thompson. A half smile played around the corners of his tired old eyes. Highball Thompson, who had made the fastest run with a freight ever clocked across the division, a hundred and fifty mile run, up and down the hills, around the curves, through the tunnels and across the trestles, one hundred and fifty miles in three hours and ten minutes. It had never been done since, even with these big powerful engines they had to-day.

But those days were gone. Railroading had lost its flavor. Men spelled little nowadays. A mechanical business this, and its romance had departed. He'd lived his life in the heat of action; he'd ridden the jolting cushion of a seatbox for many a thousand miles. He'd smelled the sulphurous tang of burning coal, the greasy odor of hot valve oil too long to be without it. Never again to feel the 933's throttle grip warm and smooth in his hand!

Never again to know the springing, lifting surge as she swept around a curve, to glance back at the long string of coaches trailing fast behind her! Never again to raise the lilting, reverberating *waa! waa! wa! waho!* of a crossing blow! Not for him. He'd gained the right to this way by right of seniority. He'd hold his rights to the end, to the end that was very near now.

Affectionately he looked at the shining copper can rack above the fire door, at the polished brass trim around the boilerhead, at the lubricator all a-dazzle in the light from the globe behind it. To think that some other man would step up into the 933's cab and take his place! Few engineers took the pride in their engines that he did. The polished brass would soon tarnish, the varnished paint work become smoke-stained, the shining cab windows grimy and grease-streaked. That big steamboat whistle, he'd paid fifty dollars for it, his own money—to think some one else would be playing tunes on it! He shook his head. He'd take that all with him.

He leaned back on his seatbox, reached his right hand into his jumper pocket, pulled out the sheet of paper, stuck his feet against the boilerhead and braced himself. His left hand lifted; he caught the whistle cord, pulled down on it.

Waaahoo! Wa! Waahooo! Hoarse, rumbling, the roaring, lilting challenge of the 933 vibrated mournfully for the last time.

Then it came. The night was racked and torn asunder by the rolling crash of impact when hundreds of tons of steel met. The sibilant, hissing shriek of steam, the ringing rip of metal thundered, echoed and reverberated for miles across the hills and valleys.

It was noon next day when the wrecking crew lifted the twisted, jumbled pile of rock and rails, of trucks and smashed timbers off the 933. She lay turned over on her back, her drivers upward. Her front end was smashed and dented like a rusty tin can in a wagon rut. Her jacket was stripped completely off her boiler, the white asbestos lagging ripped in long, jagged tears where the steel rails on the loaded flat cars had shot javelin-like through it. Her brass work was twisted and torn, her big steamboat whistle flattened out of shape, her nickel-plated cylinder head covers broken into a hundred pieces.

And Old Bud Thompson, with a calm, lean face, lay huddled in a corner of the smashed cab. A little set smile was frozen in the corners of his mouth, as though he were still enjoying a good joke. In his hand was a crumpled bit of paper which read that he had failed to pass the physical examination on account of defective vision, and was thereby notified that, beginning on the same day, he would be on indefinite leave of absence.

THE END

John Adams, who gave you "The World's Largest Locomotive," will bring to you next month an interesting story on the world's greatest passenger engines, illustrated with many striking photos. A great article that you can't afford to miss.

Special Attention to Everybody

One Pair of Pants Had Gone and Ipecac's Job Seemed to Be Following Suit

By Arthur K. Akers

"Stand by de Ticket," the Club Car Boy Was Repeating

"BOY, huccome you lookin' so skeered around de gills?" The undersized Ipecac Ingalls hailed a fellow porter at the steps of the next car as No. 128 stood waiting under the shed to begin its long run to the east.

"Black Boy, if you'd seen whut I seen las' night, dey'd still be tryin' to overtake you wid airplanes!"

"Ain't nothin' skeer me!" declared Ipecac boldly.

"You ain't tried bein' in no train robb'ry, den. I wuz. Las' night, comin' in on No. 80. White man wid handk'chief over his face line up de passengers in de aisle of my car an' git hisse'f a hatful of watches an' money."

"Whar you at while he doin' all dat?"

"Me? Boy, I takes one look at him, an' I's de man under Lower Ten, from den on!"

"Ol' robber ain't pester me none."

"Naw? But dey's somebody on yo' car whut is; I heahs de sup'rintendent gwine th'u' to Washin'ton wid you dis trip."

"Ain't even know him. But I treats 'em all alike. Ev'y time white folks steps on my car dey gits suhvice wid a cap'tal C. Special 'tention to de drawin'-rooms an' gent'men wantin' ginger ale an' crack' ice from de diner. Treats ev'body alike. Ip'cac Pullman Ingalls, dat's me! Names cars after me!"

"Somebody gwine name a tombstone after you if you ain't pull in yo' mouth."

As soon as the train started, Ipecac's first care was to spot the superintendent. All public and platform utterances to the contrary, Ipecac knew which side his pay check was buttered on. A little scouting satisfied him regarding Who's Who in the Pullman service Lower Eight was scheduled for special

service and Ipecac for special mention!

Which gave Ipecac mighty little time in which to attend to his other passengers. Particularly the pickle-faced gentleman in Lower One. Ipecac didn't like his looks anyhow. All the time watching a boy. And fussy about dust on his window sill and the car being too hot.

"Watch your step, boy; super's on," his white folks, the conductor, cautioned in passing.

"Done got him spotted a'ready, cap'n. Suhvice ev'y minute!" grinned Ipecac.

And service Lower Eight got. If a curve shifted to the sunny side, Ipecac shifted the shades. If he coughed, Ipecac rushed ice water. Hourly Ipecac dusted off his baggage and suggested a fresh pillow.

For all of which Lower Eight continued to grouch and to demand more service than an old lady traveling fifty miles to see her married daughter who had a bad toothache.

Dinner wasn't well over in the diner before he was ringing again.

"I want my berth made up early," he growled. "Have it ready for me when I get back from the smoking room, you hear?"

"Ain't nothin' but a blur now, I's makin' hit up so fas'," acquiesced Ipecac aloud. "Jes' sociable as a wet owl wid de toothache!" he commented to himself as his superior disappeared up the aisle.

Lower Eight had scarcely retired, half an hour later, before the perspiring Ipecac made his forty-fifth trip to the annunciator. L 8, it read.

"Ol' sup'rintendent got me all wo' down on one side from givin' suhvice now—an' still ringin'!" he complained. "Done give him ev'ything but a ha'r cut an' a new spare tire now! Yessuh, cap'n! Yessuh! You ring, suh?"

A hand was passing out a pair of trousers through the parted curtains of Lower Eight.

"Get 'em pressed, up on the club car, for me," were the instructions that went with them. "And pressed, I said; not just folded along the front. I've got to get off in Washington in the morning."

"Heah de sup'rintendent's britches," Ipecac thrust the all-important garment into prominence in that part of the club car presided over by a yellow boy that Ipecac didn't like. "He say fo' you press 'em—not jes' make a pass at 'em wid a cold i'on like you gin'ally does. Wants 'em back befo' he git off at Washin'ton, too."

"Yeah? An' I says fo' you to git on out of heah befo' you chokes to death on dis i'on. All piled up wid bus'ness to-night. Ain't got no time to mess wid you. Mahk de space number an' car on de ticket an' beat hit, nigger."

Ipecac got back to Car Seven to find his annunciator ringing like a third alarm in the loft district.

"What kind of service is this?" The pickle-faced gentleman in Lower One was ripe and ready for him when Ipecac paused outside his curtains. "I've been ringing fifteen minutes! How'd you like to get reported and lose your job, huh?"

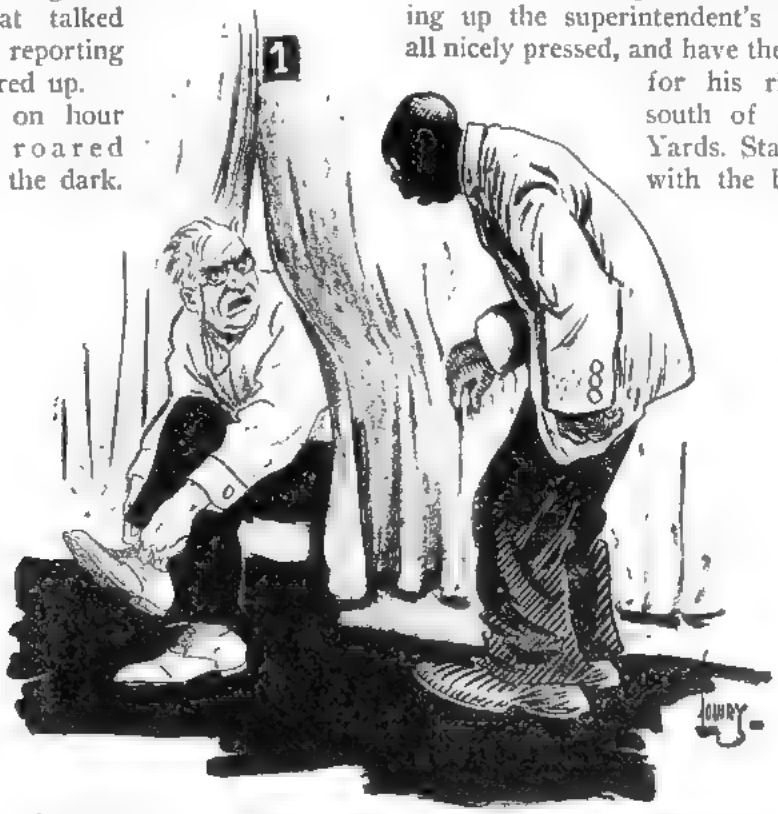
"Treats ev'ybody de same, suh. 'Special 'tention to ev'ybody," Ipecac recited his soothing litany. "'Sides, repohtin' ain't pester me none. Me an' de sup'rintendent gits on jes' like two peas in de same shell. Sho does give him de suhvice when he git on my car."

"Is that so? Well, let me have a sample of what you give mere passengers, then!" quarreled the pickle-

faced party meaningly. "Call me at seven in the morning, wherever we are."

"Calls you at sevum 'clock, no matter whut time hit is," confirmed Ipecac. Wasn't any use keeping this pickle-faced gentleman that talked about reporting him stirred up.

Hour on hour No. 18 roared through the dark.



"Seven O'clock and How Much More?" Shouted the Pickle-faced Passenger

Refreshed by a small nap and surrounded by what looked to him like a young shoe store, Ipecac estimated sadly how much he was soon going to have to pay out for polish, as he plied his brushes. Lower Eight's shoes were set aside for an extra-special shine. Stand in with the superintendent, was the way Ipecac handled his business. Anyway, grouches like Lower One didn't get so far even if they made good any threats about reporting him. Maybe that was what he had been sending that telegram about in the middle of the night, back there.

II

After they passed Monroe, Ipecac figured on shuffling forward and picking up the superintendent's trousers, all nicely pressed, and have them ready for his ring just south of Potomac Yards. Standing in with the boss-man this way sure did help a boy along the stony road—

Ipecac nodded over his labors—and awoke to the bang and clatter of sailing down through the freight yards at Monroe.

Gray daylight was stealing in at the windows, and his schedule was fixing to get in a jam!

Scooping up his boxes and brushes, he gave a hasty lick and promise to eleven pairs of unshined shoes, and came out of the washroom with them

like a schoolboy going to a circus. Old passengers would be lucky if he got them sorted right, let alone shined!

Ipecac hit the platform with his ice bucket in one hand and the other still struggling its way into the sleeve of his coat. In his mind there was a big traffic congestion: ice for drinking water, seven o'clock call for the pickle-faced gentleman, and pants for the superintendent in Lower Eight, were all ganging up on him at once. Liable to be a lot of arguments, too. When white folks got fussy, all the special attention in the world wouldn't get them satisfied with somebody else's shoes.

Ipecac could hardly wait for the train to get moving again before he became important around the club car.

"Now whut you want?" the yellow boy in charge there demanded sleepily.

"Craves dem pants fo' de sup'rintendent. Bet you ain't press 'em yit."

"Done pressed an' delivered. Heah de ticket—Car Sevumteen, Lower Eight."

Ipecac heard, read, gasped—and hit the ceiling!

"Car S-s-s-sevumteem!" he stuttered aghast. "Niggah, dem pants come off Car *Sevum!* Car Sevumteem done switch off fo' Nawfawk long time 'go!"

So far as Ipecac was concerned, the club car boy's mouth was opening and shutting like a fish's. There wasn't anything coming out of it. Ipecac couldn't hear him anyhow, for hearing, in his imagination, his boss-man in Lower Eight. He had thought he had had his business in jams before, but he hadn't. Only this was the real genuine article in jams, and, worse yet, he saw no way out!

"—Stands by de ticket," the club car boy was repeating. "If you writes sevumteen fo' sevum, dat yo' hahd luck."

"Never could tell which one ub dem figures had de one in hit!" mourned the stricken Ipecac. "Sho is wasted a heap of suhvice on dat white man now!"

"Boy, you better stick yo' haid 'tween dem cu'tains an' quit quick befo' he git his mouth open," advised the club car porter gloomily.

"If he ain't git after me wid nothin' but his mouth, I's all busted out wid luck!" wailed Ipecac, his face a brownish lavender in the sickly morning light.

Ipecac knew exactly how the army boys felt when they got up early one morning to face a firing squad. He was going to have to tell a Pullman official who was planning to get off in Washington that he didn't have any pants to get off in!

In his anguish he looked at his watch. To break into groans and a mild gallop.

"Sevum-thutty now," he spoke to himself, "an' I plumb fo'gits, wid all dem britches on my mind, to wake up de pickle-face' gent'man at sevum!"

But the pickle-faced party was already awake—and waiting grimly in his berth.

"Sevum 'clock, gin'ral! An' hopes you slep' good, suh," Ipecac ingratiated himself.

"Seven o'clock—and how much more?" shouted the pickle-faced passenger. "Look at your watch! And then look around you, good, because you're on your last run."

Like one drowning, the panorama of past weeks ran through Ipecac's tortured mind. He thought of those good-looking colored girls coming down to the depots in the Carolinas to see him pass through; all those half-

price meals in the diners, looking down on cotton field darkeys working alongside the tracks while he ate. And now —his job was fixing to join Lower Eight's pants.

"Cun'l, you cain't give me no trouble," he summarized his situation. "I done got all de trouble dey is a'ready"

III

THE annunciator rang, seemingly to prove it.

"'Scuse me minute, bawss," he mumbled miserably. "I knows dat ring; de *real* trouble jes' fixin' staht now."

It was Lower Eight

"Now lay me down to sleep, I prays de Lawd dem pants to fotch," Ipecac misquoted fervently as he shuffled to his doom.

Lower Eight was wrathfully erect in his berth

"Hurry up with those pants I gave you to press last night! Ain't we nearly to Washington now?" he barked.

"W-w-whut pants, cap'n?" Ipecac stalled desperately. This was even worse than he had imagined.

"*My* pants! My *only* pants, as far as this trip's concerned! Get 'em and get 'em fast, too, you hear? I find I've got to get off in Potomac Yards, instead of Washington."

More trouble and less time! Ipecac was ghastly.

"Cap'n, cain't I get you somep'n *else?*" he suggested feverishly. "Breakfas' or a fraish piller—"

"Pants I said!" rasped Lower Eight the more savagely. Ipecac never had seen a white man so set on one thing.

"My Pants! My Only Pants, as Far as This Trip Is Concerned! Get 'em, an' Get 'em Fast, Too, You Hear?"

"Yessuh, cap'n; jes' like you says —pants, pants—" he mumbled thickly. His feet made motions toward the club car again.

Lower Eight was rapidly becoming violent. Worse, the pickle-faced passenger in Lower One was beginning to overhear him and take an interest

"Get me the conductor, quick!" he

snapped at Ipecac as that dazed worthy passed him.

"Yessuh, jes' quick's gits de gent'man's pants—dey's in Nawfawk," promised Ipecac confusedly. Keeping all these white folks pacified until he could leap from the train at Potomac Yards was going to be about ninety-eight per cent more than he could attend to now.

They were slowing for the Yards now, too. Ipecac opened the vestibule door preparatory to leaving the Pullman service the minute the train stopped.

But two white gentlemen interfered. They were boarding his car.

"Hold on, boy; we want you—inside!" snapped one. "This is it—Car Seven, like the wire said," grunted the other.

But, once inside, everything got mixed up worse than ever! Herding the dazed Ipecac ahead of them, the pair strode down the aisle to Lower Eight, just as though he were guiding them straight to it.

Suddenly they dived through its curtains, and a brief scuffle followed before the strange white gentlemen emerged with the occupant of Lower Eight, handcuffed as to hands and blanketed as to lower limbs.

Some more things were fixing to be Ipecac's fault now, he realized. In fact, he saw it coming as the pickle-faced gentleman approached

But it was what that reporter of porters said that next tied Ipecac's straining intellect up in a knot.

"That's him, all right, Murphy," he was approving the capture grimly. "I wired you last night as soon as I identified him. A witness on the next car 'll be ready for you whenever you want him in court. Just let me know at the Pullman offices in Washington when you need me."

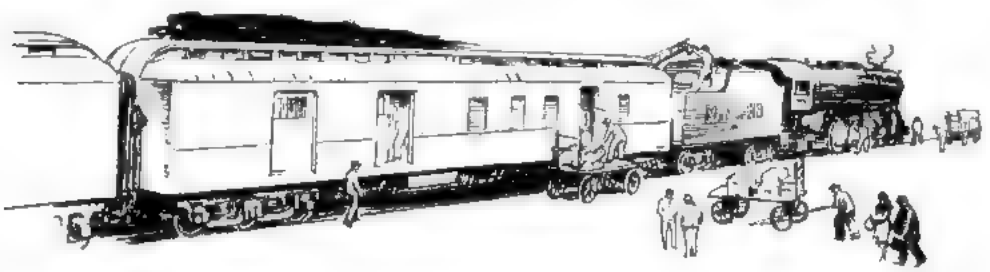
Ipecac blinked. In a minute he was going to wake up now—

But the pickle-faced gentleman didn't wait for that. Instead—

"As for you, porter," he was smiling straight at Ipecac, "I had you down for firing for neglecting all your other passengers in favor of this train robber in Lower Eight. But I see your game now, and I congratulate you on your scheme of holding him on the train by hiding his trousers. It was great! You'll get special mention for that!"

Ipecac gasped unbelievingly. Then busied himself suddenly with his whisk on the pickle-faced gentleman as his ears finished registering the sound of two familiar words

"S'prises my ownse'f how smart I is, sometimes!" he chuckled as a great light broke over his brain. "Gits my white folks mixed up sometimes, but *''special 'tention* to ev'ybody,' dat's whut gits me out of de jam in de long run—sup'rintendent!"



Heavy Loss Resulted From This Derailment at Marysville, Ill., April 29, 1926, When the Gasoline Tank Cars Burned for Days

Hauling High Hazard

Dynamite and Other Explosives Present a Ticklish Problem in Freight, but the Railroads Make Good

By John Walker Harrington

EVERY car carded red is a wheeled hell, waiting to break loose. Hauling explosives has always meant danger just around the curve. All the more credit, then, to the railroads for carrying more than five hundred million dollars' worth of such nervous stuff as dynamite and gunpowder every year without killing or hurting anybody. For the last three years the damage from mishaps to this class of freight can practically be reckoned in goose eggs. In 1929 the grand total of property loss was about fifty dollars; it summed up to seventy-seven dollars in 1928, and forty-five dollars in 1927. Not a bad showing this, especially as compared with 1916, when sudden rises in TNT, "pick," and shells destroyed goods, cars, and houses that cost more than eleven million dollars, snuffed out seven lives, and injured one hundred and sixty-eight persons.

Rapping the nearest wood—for it seems presumptuous even to think about getting rid of hazard in the handling of explosives and inflammables—the prospects for 1930 are good. Of course, there is likely to be trouble from gasoline until the end of time, for a fifteen-billion-gallon ocean of it is produced every year, and a few

drops are bound to leak. However, as the total losses due to accidents to all classes of dangerous articles carried by rail in 1928 was only eight hundred thousand dollars in total shipments of several billions, the record may safely be called a remarkably good one. The

After the Explosion at Black Tom—the Worst in the History of Transportation The Loss Here Was $10,000,000

figures for 1929, now being checked, indicate a still smaller percentage of loss

These excellent results have been reached by team work among railroad employees. Division superintendents, yardmasters, enginemen, switching crews, and brakies have all been in close harmony. It was the railroaders themselves who made the rules for the codes of s a f e t y. The general public thinks that the Interstate Commerce Commission is responsible for framing the regulations it enforces. As a matter of fact, an act of Congress authorizes the I. C. C. to use the services of the Bureau for the Safe Transportation of Explosives and Other Dangerous Articles, which is conducted by the railroads as a group. The Bureau of Explosives, to use its shorter name, suggests rules on its own account and also tests out those proposed by the I. C. C. before that body officially decides whether or not to put them in force. This amounts to getting a verdict on a proposed rule from many thousands of men who are closest to the big job of transportation.

A switchman, looking down from his tower at night, may see a shower of friction sparks set fire to some fluid on the track. He reports it, and an investigation follows. A few drops of gasoline are found dripping from a tank car, probably owing to a broken rivet. The Bureau of Explosives is informed, and it may be that a new rule relating to the transportation of dangerous com-

modities is born. Its godfathers are those who will have to obey it. The railroads, acting through a channel of their own, thus approve the laws which govern them in this branch of their service.

"No better foundation can any law have," says Colonel B. W. Dunn, chief inspector of the bureau. "It may be suggested that regular legislators could improve their product by a similar method. Compare our congested court dockets with the fact that one could almost count on the fingers of one hand the number of prosecutions in the last twenty years for violations of the railroads' safety regulations."

Whenever a rule is made for the safe conveyance of explosives and dangerous or inflammable substances, it has behind it hard common sense, practical experience, and a long line of reports of accidents resulting from its principle not having been observed.

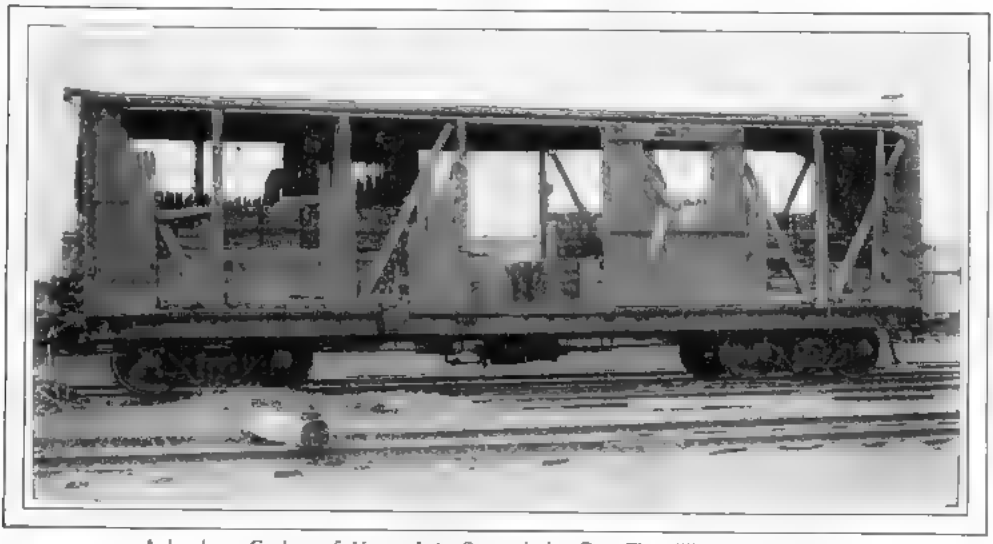
Strictest Rules

One of the strictest rules governing explosives, for instance, is that all boxes or kegs filled with gunpowder or similar substances shall be so tight that nothing can sift out of them. Box cars are not supposed to have cracks in them, but most of them do, all the same, and loose powder is likely to sift through the floor or under the doors. A spark may enter a closed car through some tiny aperture in the sides or the roof. The I. C. C. rule requires that no car carrying explosives shall be placed near the engine or the caboose; but for all that a livelier spark than usual may travel in its cinder coat from some factory along the route, or perhaps from a locomotive on the other track. The rule is aimed, too, at the friction sparks caused by the grinding of wheels on the rails.

This Projectile Was Found Embedded in a Pier After the Black Tom Blast

The smokeless powder fire at South Amboy, New Jersey, in the autumn of 1923, was one of the worst disasters that ever resulted from careless packing. A large consignment of the explosive, salvaged from government ammunition, was brought by sea from Charleston, South Carolina, to the Jersey port. There twenty-three carloads of it were moved from the dock and routed over the Pennsylvania Railroad for the arsenal near Lake Hopatcong. Shortly after the train was set in motion a quick flash leaped from the last car but one, followed a few seconds later by a flare that reddened the evening sky. Smokeless powder, when used for artillery, is not exploded by a spark, but by detonators. Set it afire, and it burns with a fierce heat.

The South Amboy yardmaster and his crew cut the train a car or so ahead of the burning one, as they could not get any nearer without being blistered



A Leaking Carboy of Nitric Acid Started the Fire That Wrecked This Car

to death. The blazing car, which was built of wood, was soon destroyed, and its heat ignited a steel box car still coupled to it. The metal car became a white-hot retort. Its sides bloated out under the pressure of the burning powder. Then its side doors blew out, and searing flames swept a line of automobiles filled with people who were watching the fire, and who would not move away when urged to do so by the train crew. Five spectators were killed outright, and twenty-eight others were injured, including the conductor, who died several days later. Seven autos were destroyed.

It was learned, by an examination of the cars that were saved, that the whole shipment had been carelessly handled. The powder was packed in boxes which had previously been used for the shells from which it was taken. The boxes were old and battered and leaky, and some of them were so poorly stowed that they were tumbled about and split by the motion of the train. Powder was strewn on the car floors—so much of it that the crew had to sweep it away before closing the side doors. Some of it, naturally, had sifted out upon the tracks and on the top of the dock. Other boxes had been broken while a gasoline hoist was lifting them out of the barge on which they had arrived, the sling in which they were placed having been permitted to let go with a bump

There had been a slight gasoline fire on the pier, and this probably started the fireworks. Given the presence of loose powder in such quantities, as Colonel Dunn remarked at the time, the exact cause of ignition may be considered relatively unimportant. Half a dozen possible reasons for the spread of the fire could be traced. Friction sparks, live cinders from locomotives or ash pits, the heat which creeps into rails when heavy trains pass over them —these are only a few of the whys and wherefores of such a disaster as that at South Amboy.

Just by way of illustration, the chief inspector had three quarts of the powder placed on and near a rail, over which he sent a locomotive pushing a carload of coal. The impact of the car wheels made the explosive spit and

crackle, and the heavy driver of the hog finished the test in a blaze of glory, as flames from the lighted powder shot eight feet into the air. The railroad world has never forgotten the lesson in the proper packing and stowing of high explosives which was taught on that day of doom at the mouth of the Raritan.

Use of Extreme Caution

Under their self-imposed rules, sanctioned and enforced over the seal of the I. C. C., the railroads see to it that all containers of explosives and inflammables are tight when received. The cases or drums, whatever they may be, are braced and cleated in position in the cars, so that they cannot be moved in any direction by a hard bump, or even by a head-on collision. As far as possible, a shipment of explosives gets a car all by itself. If not, it is well separated from any other merchandise which may be at the other end of the car.

The roads are not overjoyed to handle explosives in the L. C. L. class, but they do it. They always see that the stowing and the bracing are done by their own experts, who are just as skillful as the crack stevedores of the steamship lines

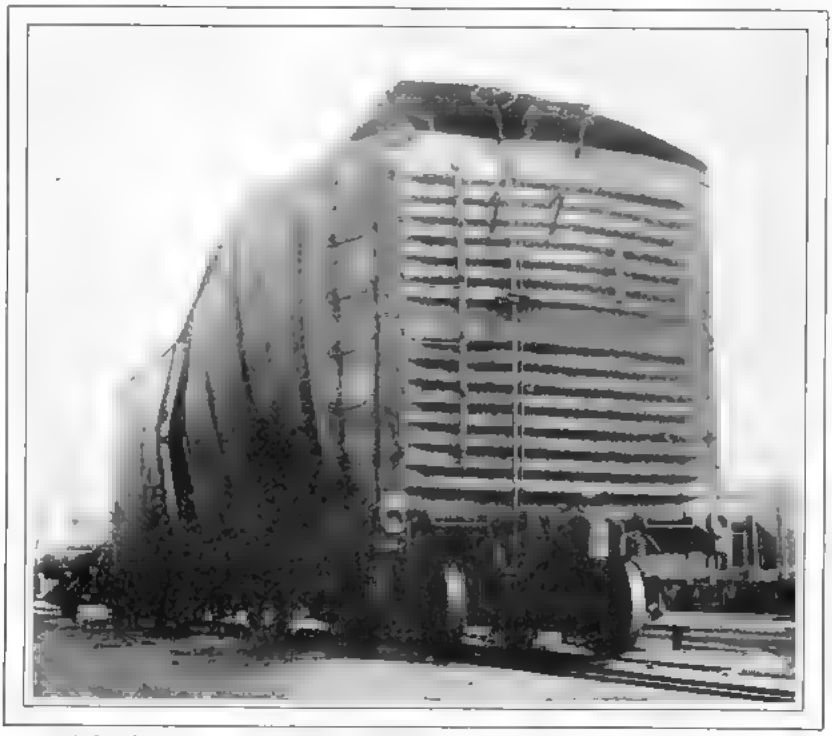
One of the prettiest sights in expert packing can be seen daily at the West Shore transfer terminal at Kingston, New York. Full carloads of high explosives are brought from a near-by plant at Port Ewen and sorted out for distribution in small consignments, which are shipped in cars containing other goods. These West Shore stowers, who claim the championship of the East, work with speed akin to that of lightning, and yet with such care that their handiwork seems to be immune from any risk of mishap.

Explosives are not the only articles

How Gasoline Explosions Start Photo Shows Workmen Repairing Leaky Outlet Valve

which may cause serious accidents if not properly stowed. Nitric acid is the leading "bad actor" among the crude chemicals. Some of the worst fires it has caused have been due to small quantities of acid left in carboys billed "M. T." Formerly such empties were not always well braced. Sometimes they tumbled over, a few ounces of their scalding heeltaps spilled on the floor, and, if there was enough air coming in, the car was soon ablaze. One of the horrible examples of this kind of chemical fire is shown in a photograph of a gutted box car offered as an exhibit by the Bureau of Explosives. Railroads now insist that no supposedly empty carboy be delivered to them unless the shipper has thoroughly rinsed it with water. In this and other matters of the same kind the bureau has successfully enlisted the co-operation of business men.

If the railroads can tell exactly what they are expected to carry, and if shippers will mark articles as explosive or inflammable, as the I. C. C. rules specify, danger can be kept down well toward the vanishing point. Even at that, railroad employees should use eyes, noses, and ears in their hunt for Old Man Trouble. Articles which seem harmless enough may be sources of sudden danger. The odor of chlorine gas, a whiff of gasoline, just the faintest scent of sulphur—these are signs which experienced men read as they would an open book.



A Steel Car Bulges Under Gas Pressure as the Result of a Gunpowder Fire at South Amboy, N. J.

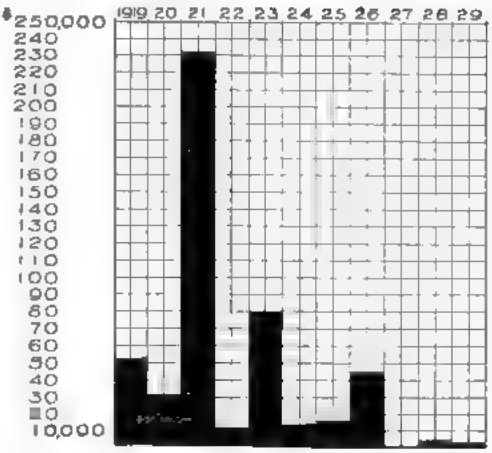
Not long ago a wide-awake fellow caught just the suspicion of an odd smell in a box car. He nosed around until he traced it to a small packing

case, which he decided to investigate. No sooner had he ripped off the cover than the smoldering contents burst into flames. The case had contained artistic lamp shades freshly painted, and the linseed oil used in the paint had not hardened sufficiently before the goods were packed.

As is known to every railroad employee who handles such materials, linseed oil never really dries. It merely combines with the oxygen of the air, or oxidizes, until, with the pigment it contains, it forms a skin or film. Not until it has set into a firm coat should it be kept in any closed space. The painted lamp shades in their tight box gave off an inflammable gas. Had they not been removed in time, they would probably have caused one of those spontaneous combustion fires that are never accounted for.

If a trainman detects the smell of overripe bananas in a car, he starts on a scouting tour at once, and without any open flame lantern. He realizes that somewhere there is an escape of the vapor of one of the quick dryers used in paints, which are largely made of amyl acetate, a liquid known in the chemical trade as banana oil. In a confined area this peculiarly scented gas needs only a touch of fire, perhaps a chance spark from the stack, to blow a stout old freight car to pieces.

Proper labeling means much in reducing the risk of carrying explosives. The placards of warning are standardized as to their size, their color, their printed words, and even the type they use. The red tag has the right of way anywhere. The law requires that each car containing explosives shall be marked in at least one place. Some of the railroads bend over backward in their anxiety to obey the rule, for they card such cars in four spots, at the



The Table Shows the Record the Railroads Have Made in Cutting Down Explosives Damage Losses. The Peak Was in 1921

sides and at the ends. The danger signals can be seen from any part of a yard.

Rough handling in the switching of cars containing dangerous freight is becoming a thing of the past. Accidents due to yard operations have been decreasing ever since the Bureau of Explosives was founded. Its last available annual report shows that 92.57 per cent of the small losses in this class of goods are due to wrecks or derailments, usually in actual transit. The remaining 7.43 per cent are traced to various other causes. Back in 1919 wrecks or derailments were held responsible for 55.56 per cent of the accidents, while other causes made 44.44 per cent of the whole number.

Much of the credit for the great advance in safety is due to the self-control and sturdy common sense of the switching crews. There is not in all railroading an operation in which men take more pride than the expert handling of freight cars. The way a real master of the art can take a cut of ten or units and kick them gently or briskly to clear is a sight for gods and men.

In these days no red-carded box is kicked, if the yardmasters or the inspectors of the Bureau of Explosives are wise to any such practices. After the pins are pulled, the cars are gently shoved by the engine to the place where they b e l o n g. There are no flying switches for these pets of the service, and none takes the hump at Selkirk or anywhere else. For ordinary freight g r a v i t y and momentum are well enough, but not so with the placarded select. They are handled more gently than baskets of eggs on the way to market. Even a slight bumping of the rear of a car which may not have cleared might set loose a riot that would shake old Mother Earth for forty miles.

1916 Saw Most Accidents

Since the World War the railroads have been able to regulate the movements of explosives much better than they could possibly have done when all kinds of munitions were being hurried to the seaboard for shipment overseas. The year 1916, which was marked by the highest peak for accidents due to explosives in charge of railroads, was an abnormal one. The United States did not enter the European conflict until the following year, but she was furnishing munitions in enormous quantities to the Allies. A great store of these supplies had been concentrated on a peninsula in the upper bay of New York Harbor, formerly an island, and known as Black Tom. The place is almost within the shadow of the Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island, and is in the State of New Jersey. There the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company had offices, docks, float bridges, and miles of tracks. The eastern end of the property, the North Pier, extended five hundred feet out from the mainland, and was used for transferring explosives from cars to barges or lighters, by which these materials of war were taken to Gravesend Bay, to be put aboard ocean steamships

On July 30, 1916, the Black Tom piers and storehouses were swept by a disastrous fire and shattered by a series of explosions, which wrought havoc for miles around. The conflagration was almost undoubtedly of incendiary origin, being started by some miscreant who, with utter disregard of the lives and property of neutrals, wished to stop the shipment of munitions to the Allies. Several workers on the piers were killed, and the d a m a g e done amounted to many millions of dollars.

Leaving the Black Tom disaster out of the reckoning, a glance at the reports of losses from explosives on railroad property in the last twenty years shows the steady progress of the safety campaign. In 1907 the total loss was $496,820, but three years later it had been scaled down to $43,636. Several accidents of an unusual nature brought the toll to $232,439 in 1921, but in 1922 extra vigilance reduced it to the negligible figure of $75. With such fickle forces to deal with as explosives high and low, it is hard to set exact and uniform standards.

It will never be possible to secure complete immunity f r o m accidents while explosives and dangerous materials are actually moving on the rails. In these piping times of peace, however, there are no munition trains. Explosives and inflammables are carried in cars and tanks made up with ordinary freight. Under the Federal regulations cars containing such freight, while in transit, must be kept as far as possible from tanks of gasoline or oil or similar inflammable liquids.

When everything is peaceful and

uneventful, this arrangement works out very well. It failed to register, however, one day in 1926, when a freight train was derailed near Towners, New York, on the Central New England Railroad. A tank car filled with gasoline was overturned, its inflammable contents poured out through dome and broken outlet valves, and several cars took fire, either from friction sparks or from the locomotive. Toward the rear of the train was a box car loaded with three hundred kegs of powder. From the blazing tank the flames spread quickly to the jumble of cars piled in a deep cut. The yardmaster sent out messengers with red flags to as many as possible of the houses in the neighborhood, warning the inmates to keep away from the wrecked train, and advising them to open all their windows, if they wished to save the glass.

He then backed an engine up to the powder car, using a loaded gondola of coal as a buffer, and tried to pull the explosive cargo out of harm's way. Just about the time he made the contact three hundred kegs of powder went up in a mighty blast that shook several counties of New York and Connecticut. The yardmaster luckily escaped, because of the heavy barrier of the coal car.

Interstate Commerce Commission Rules Require Powder to Be Packed Like This

The railroad man who takes no special notice of gasoline tank cars on his train, whether he be conductor or brakeman, is likely to pay for his indifference. Gas vapor spreads so easily that a little of it may scatter havoc. What could seem more harmless, for instance, than a certain gasoline tank car standing on a siding? A gondola had been cut out of a train because of a hot box, and late in the evening it was pushed on the same siding with the tank. Whoever did the job failed to notice that the tank was connected by a pipe with a near-by filling station. The push the gasoline tank received broke off the connection, and gallons of its volatile contents poured on the ground. A conductor, who certainly could not have had a very good sense

of smell, scooped up a handful of what he thought was water, and dashed it on the overheated journal. A blinding flash, and all was over with him!

Watching Leaky Gas

YARDMASTERS who are on the job get busy even if a few drops of "gas" trickle from a tank, and give warning that whatever is done no naked flames shall be brought near it. The need for caution was pointedly expressed in a verse which a railroad poet once chalked on the black side of one of the big wheeled cylinders. It read:

IN MEMORY OF HENRY CARR TINKER

Here lies the body of Careless Hank,
Who lost regard for a leaky tank.
"Keep all lights and fires away" —
That is what the placards say;
He struck a match, and—let us pray!

If a tank of "gas" is letting go only a few drops, it may be calked about a rivet hole, or perhaps a dab of shellac will stop the flow. If not, good practice requires that it should be taken to as lonely a spot as can be picked on railroad property, and should have its contents transferred to another car. The rule, now seldom broken, which ordains that cars of this type should be filled while the caps have been removed from the outlet valves at the bottom makes for safety. The caps are only an added precaution; they do not help much if the valves themselves are at all defective. Hence that rule of "caps off" about which the inspectors of the Bureau of Explosives are so strict.

Out on the road emergency braking, derailments, wrecks, bumps, and real honest-to-goodness collisions often result in grave disaster, if there are any gasoline tank cars in the train. With all the sources from which a vagrant spark may come, it is surprising that the losses are not heavier than they are. The energy and the good team work of all grades of railroad employees are keeping down such accidents. As gasoline is now responsible for about two-thirds of the deaths from the handling of dangerous materials in transit, the problem will be tackled with all the more determination this year.

Passenger trains are not affected by these conditions, as their schedules do not bring them into much contact with heavy freight service. Most persons classed as "innocent bystanders" in accounts of explosions on railroads are curious onlookers who have been implored to get out of the way. In 1928, in an especially heavy gasoline fire following the derailment of a train of seventy-three tank cars, eight tramps were trapped and burned to death in one of two empty box cars at the end of the string. These poor fellows, of course, were trespassers, not passengers. So large a number could hardly have been there without the consent of the trainmen, who were wrong in trying to do a kindness. Had they not let their rule books get dusty, they would have realized that the Interstate Commerce Commission knew what it was about when it forbade the carrying of passengers on any train in which there are cars carrying dangerous freight. It is unlikely that such a loss of life as this will occur again very soon, as the railroads are making a special effort to retire all "side-door Pullmans."

Railroad employees are no nearer absolute perfection than are members of other callings. Occasionally one is found who is careless, or too good-natured for his own good and that of the service. On the whole, however, the many thousands who work on the railroads are cautious, competent, and eager to coöperate with the companies through the Bureau of Explosives.

Who's Who in the Crew

Griff Crawford, Who Made You Laugh at Porky, Is a Real Rail and Knows His Dots and Dashes

WHEN we asked Griff Crawford, author of "Porky Goes Up" and "Black Hand," which is given to you in this issue, for a little dope about himself to pass on to you readers, Griff wasn't very generous. He's a shy, retiring chap, anyhow.

This is all Griff will say:

I must have been born under the Zodiac sign of the goat—for some one is always getting mine, and it looks like I have always got one ready for them. In thirty years' railroading I have left many roads, sometimes by request, sometimes because they did not want me any longer under any circumstances

Some of these lines have made me so impatient with their manner of doing business I have never returned to them. One must have a certain degree of pride

I love large, juicy steaks. The larger the better. I love music, editors who buy my stuff and orange pop. I detest two-faced people, carrots, jazz and being poor

I am not so old, still I am not rated as a spring chicken. When under full-feed I run up to around one hundred and ninety-five, but on various lean occasions this weight has been reduced to one hundred and sixty, so that I might give my average avoirdupois at about one hundred and sixty two.

Griff Crawford

In race I am (reasonably) white. In politics I am a rock ribbed homeopathic. I believe in longer skirts, especially on some people. I am afraid Dr. Cook will have a difficult time convincing the public he painted the North Pole, and I could worry along without the movie sheiks, but I do love a good, sensible play with real actors

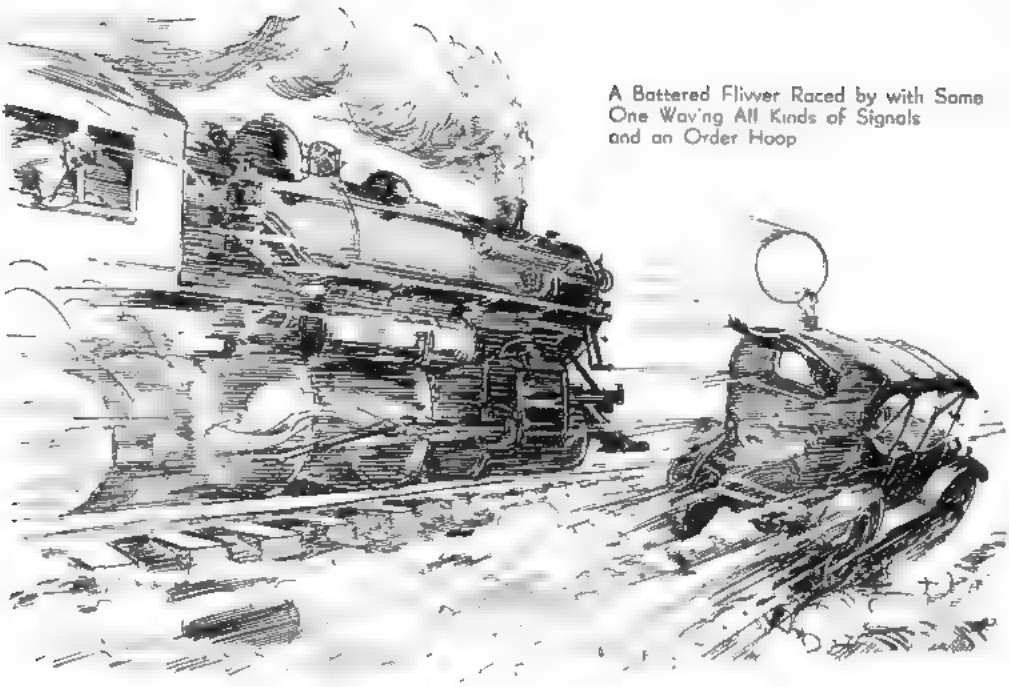
I do not imagine I could write a movie scenario

I have never appeared in public in golf pants —nor won't

So, in view of the foregoing, the editor will have to tell you that Griff is a train dispatcher, working a trick in the West on a famous railroad. He has been all through the mill for quite a few years, and has gained a clear understanding of human nature in his association with various breeds of the Knights of the Key.

Griff first broke into print with poetry—don't throw that thing, Griff—and then turned his spare talents to humorous fiction. He's another outstanding regular contributor to RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE who is also a practical railroader now in harness.

Some day he *may* wear golf pants—you can't tell about authors.



A Battered Flivver Raced by with Some One Waving All Kinds of Signals and an Order Hoop

Black Hand

Boomer Smith Dispatched Trains, Troubles and Dark Days with the Aid of Secret Works

By Griff Crawford

J. (BOOMER) SMITH was a firm believer in Black Hand methods. Not that he intended or approved of sticking long, narrow-bladed knives between an adversary's ribs or holding desirable victims for ransom, but he swore by the more gentle, diplomatic way of doing some one a favor and having that one under obligations to him. Neither did the Boomer intend to use the advantage thus gained in any illegitimate way or for personal gain, but he agreed to himself it was highly appropriate, at times, to have information under one's skull that might have a distinct bearing on any circumstances that might arise.

That was one of the reasons why rarely, if ever, did the Boomer make a report of things that nosey officials would have given an arm to know about. Such things as a crew overlooking a wait order, or a superior train, or starting across the district without proper credentials in the way of orders were some of the things he apparently forgot and certainly ignored more than once in his career.

If there were no circumstances which

would lead to the information leaking out, a train or engine crew could always gamble on the Boomer covering up any slopover. Naturally when one of these occasions arose the persons at fault were grateful to the Boomer, who saved many from getting time checks or being brownied out of service.

Boomer knew what it was to overlook one's hand. He had done the thing himself more than once, and what dispatcher has not? Now and then one will admit that he has never put out a lap order, and I would not for the world make it appear that I doubted the assertion, especially if the claimant is a husky individual with a mean disposition, but I will say that if he has worked a trick as long as six months on an average job, and desires to proclaim his record as standing unblemished that, should a stranger ask who I considered the biggest liar in the country I would slyly slip him that dispatcher's address. So Boomer was no exception when it is admitted he had had his "moments."

II

"Kid" Gregg had been promoted to working a trick but little over six weeks when he made his first slopover. Kid Gregg was just a little bit different from the usual run of trickmen. He was, at times, entirely likable, but he was stuck on himself, and that is a failing that can't be overlooked in any dispatcher's office. He had had excellent breaks in his work, and, due to the fact that he had made good meeting points right along, he concluded that dispatching, for him, was a cinch. He considered himself one of those natural wonders who could sit in on any job and show the other fellows up—you've seen 'em.

The night it happened was, as the poets say, a terrible night—not on the Kid's side, but on the district Boomer was handling.

Kid Gregg had a couple of locals, both nearly in, and a rush train of threshing machinery that was being hurried west. This latter train was being watched closely because the many letters and telegrams concerning it carried the notation, "Future business depends on the expedite movement of this shipment." The Kid was running it as No. 119, a second-class schedule.

Boomer had, as he admitted, one helluva railroad. With three drags, a W.P.9 and a first-class train westbound, two sections of a first-class schedule, a W.P.8, a stock train and a drag all eastbound, and all within a radius of thirty miles business was good. And in the midst of things, when it seemed they could get no worse, a hogger by the name of Klinkenschmidt, a new man making his first trip and leading the westward procession, discovered he was out of water and pulled his fire one-half mile East of Blair siding. The road was tied up promptly for more than three hours. When Boomer received the sad news he grunted.

"I'm glad of it," he said. "Any company who'd hire a man by the name of Klinkenschmidt oughta have its road put on the blink; there ain't room on a train sheet for him, a name like that, anyway."

During the next few hours Kid Gregg had a chance to see how an experienced man handled such a situation, and he was all ears as Boomer issued instructions, towing an engine here, getting a box car ahead there so they could couple in, putting trains in the clear and lining things to the best advantage. So engrossed with

Boomer's work did he become that he forgot his own to some extent, and when Pixley reported 119 by he gave the yardmaster a call figure for the connection out.

Then something hit him. His face went white, then red and he gulped a couple of times before he could command his voice, and he hurriedly scanned the order book—

"Holy—" he said. "Goshalmighty."

"'S'matter?" inquired Boomer.

"I—I—let 119 by Pixley without anything on 118—they'll be sewed up at Simms. Goshalmighty!"

Boomer walked around the table and looked things over. There were two blind sidings between Pixley and the terminal, Simms and Claremont. There was no doubt the merchandise train would have to stay at Simms, which was six miles west of Pixley, that being as far as they could make without help on the superior train. Boomer cut his phone in and got the operator at Pixley.

"Ya got a three-wheeler around there?" he asked

"Nope. Ain't got nothin'."

"How about a hand car and a section snipe?"

"None here. The gang stays at Randolph."

"Don't suppose anybody there has an auto?"

"I've Done It Now, and I'd Better Resign"

"Nope. There's none in this part of the country."

"Ya know any way ya could get an order taken out to Simms?"

"Nope—wait a minnit"—there was a pause—"say, here's a man goin' right by there. Says he lives just beyond Simms and he'll take one out."

"How's he travelin'?"

"On a mule"

"Hell's-fire-and-the-calves-got out!

Well, take one and ask him to deliver it—and to please hurry the mule all he can."

The order was placed as speedily as possible, completed, and final instructions given the native. In a few minutes Pixley reported him as having departed, trying to induce the mule to lope as he disappeared. When this was accomplished the Kid sighed. Boomer had returned to his own neglected work and it was several minutes before the Kid could converse with him. When the opportunity came he walked around the table a time or two, nervous and worried.

"I guess I'd better resign," he said. Boomer looked up, surprised.

"What for?"

"They'll can me anyway."

"Mebbe they won't know anything about it."

"They're bound to—all that delay." He gazed out the window. "I'll bet that crew's cussin' me."

"I'll bet they're playin' stud poker if they've got in over there yet." Boomer completed an order before he continued: "Lissen, Kid; don't ever uncover your hand till ya have to—keep your hole card dark; when ya have to let loose of a thing, do it, but not till then."

"But they'll get an hour, maybe an hour and a half, over there."

"Yeah, they will, at that. But I got some influence with that crew—some mighty good influence. Mebbe I can fix it. Anyway, keep still till I see what I can do. I'll see 'em soon as they get in."

III

"Pig" Skelton was dealing when a long-drawn "O-O-e—e—e" sounded. At first the crew thought it was an owl, but a moment later Conductor Boggs went to the door and looked out as the call was repeated. In the moonlight, sitting astride a mule in the road that ran close to Simms siding, was a tall, angular person, his feet almost touching the ground.

"Be ye th' 119?" he drawled.

"Hey, fellers," said Boggs, "c'm' here—here's Paul Revere." The others followed the conductor to the fence.

"By gosh, that is Paul," says Pig.

"My name ain't Paul, it's Hank—Hank Snodgrass," said the stranger.

"Ya can't fool us," said Pig. "You're Paul Revere—we been readin' aboutcha in th' papers."

"If ya been readin' where I sot th' schoolhouse afire, it's a dadgummed lie; I never done it."

"Didja think we was th' British?" asked Boggs.

"Naw, suh; I thought ya was a train they was tellin' me about, but if ya wanta get so dadburned smart alecky I ain't goin' t' give ya this here telegram I got fer ya." And, kicking the mule in its ribs, he turned away.

It took but a glance to see that he held something in his hand—something they recognized too late as being a 19 order. It was ten minutes before they had apologized sufficiently to get the native to return and make the delivery.

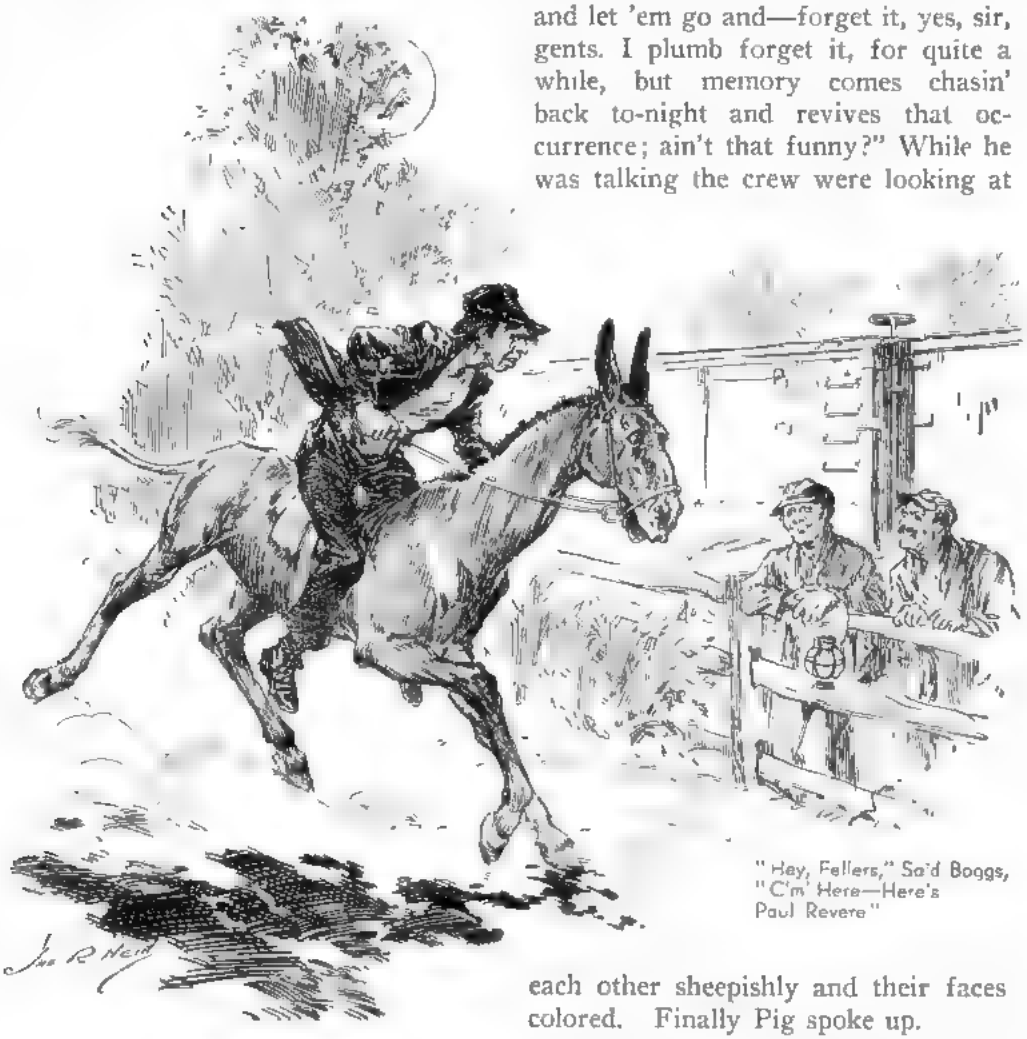
Boomer was watching and when the belated train arrived he went down to the registering room. He knew the time to see the men was before they had a chance to talk around the yard office or at the beanery, and by good luck he caught the whole bunch together with no other listeners

"Them was bad hot boxes ya had at Simms," the Boomer observed.

"Hot boxes your grandmother, it was plain dumb dispatchin'," said Boggs.

"Worst I ever see," declared Pig. "They give us a message t' make th' best time possible with this train, then hang us up at a blind sidin' fer a train that ain't on th' map yet. I'm goin' t' tell th' world how it happened, too."

"Wunst," says Boomer dreamily, "there was a crew that overlooked a meet with another train—just run right by it and went on to the next town." He lit a cigarette, blew a puff toward the ceiling. "Yes, sir, went right on to the next town and I had to drop the order board on the opposin' train and have the operator flag 'em and head 'em in and here, in a little while, comes this dumb outfit that's overlooked its hand and I highball 'em and let 'em go and—forget it, yes, sir, gents. I plumb forget it, for quite a while, but memory comes chasin' back to-night and revives that occurrence; ain't that funny?" While he was talking the crew were looking at each other sheepishly and their faces colored. Finally Pig spoke up.



"Hey, Fellers," Said Boggs, "C'm' Here—Here's Paul Revere"

"By thunder, Boggs, them was hot boxes at Simms t'night, sure as hell; I forgot about 'em till this minnit."

"Of course they was hot boxes. Who said they wasn't? Hour and ten minnits hot boxes. I can give ya the car numbers, Boomer, if ya want 'em."

"Th' delay report will be O. K. Just put 'em on th' delay report. But, come t' think of it, that's a good while for hot boxes. Le's see, mebbe it was forty

minnits at Simms for hot boxes and thirty minutes at—le's see—mile post 287 by a wagon broke down on and blockin' th' track. That's it, wasn't it? A farm wagon broke down, as I remember?"

"Yeah," said Pig, "it was loaded with posts. Fence posts."

"Tha's right," said Boggs. "I remember now, wagon load of posts." He jotted down a memo: "M.P.—287, 30 mins."

"O.K.," says Boomer. "Well, I gotta get back; g' night."

The Kid was poring over a written sheet when Boomer returned. He handed it over for inspection. It was his resignation. Boomer read it, tore it to pieces and threw it in the waste basket. Kid Gregg looked hopefully at him, but unconvinced. It couldn't be he had—

"You didn't get it—er—fixed, did you, Boomer?"

"The hell I didn't! Forty minutes at Simms, hot boxes; thirty minutes M.P. 287, farm wagon broke down on the track with a load of posts. Forget it."

"Boomer, I don't know how—I don't know what to say. How to th—"

"For Gawd's sake don't start that, Kid. I ain't done you any favor. I'd oughta let ya quit and mebbe get into somethin' else—somethin' ya could make a livin' at."

And that's how, when the story crept around the switch shanties, Kid Gregg became known as "Hee-haw," which was a veiled reference to the mule delivery inaugurated on that fateful night when he made his first slopover.

IV

Superintendent Gregg, of a western line, was rated a hard *hombre* and a stickler for the book of rules conventions. Things had to be right up to snuff without variations to suit the boss, and every one knew it on his division. Probably that is why the chief told Hart, second trick on the west end, to keep his eye on the new man that was to take the corresponding job across the table. Hart, being busy, soon conceived the idea that the newcomer was competent to take care of himself. He knew by the way he took hold of things he was no amateur at the game. Of course, there were certain physical points on the district he could not be acquainted with, and time would have to tell him who were the better runners, and the ones to be depended on. But, as a general proposition, the man was entirely adequate to handle the situation, and Hart went about the business of getting his own end lined up. When he found time he stood up at the end of the table for a bit of talk.

"Seen the super yet?" he asked.

"No, not yet. He's T. R. G. we sign th' orders with, ain't he?"

"Yeah—and, boy, he's a cannibal."

"Who's he eat?"

"Dispatchers, mostly. Of course, now and then he gobbles up an operator, hoghead, conductor or some other bit for a change, but dispatchers are his regular diet."

"'Twere always thus," quoth the new man.

"Uh-huh; he'll take a nibble at me when he gets in. His car's on the local and I stuck 'em at Leeds for a stock train."

"They don't like to be stuck; never seems to make any difference if ya stick the other fellow for them, but lay offa train they're on, boy, lay offa the train they're on."

"Ya said a mouthful, that time, but here he comes." Both dispatchers got

busy immediately, and when the object of their conversation stepped in it was apparent he was not pleased. He paid no attention to the new man, not even looking in his direction, but accosted Hart.

"Whatcha stick us up out at Leeds for?" he demanded.

"Stock was clost on the law and had to get 'em to the pens," lied Hart. "How much ya get?"

"Thirty minutes flat."

"Nix," says Hart, "not thirty, boss. Fifteen, mebbe, but not—"

"I said *thirty*."

"It ain't possible unless ya made sixty-five miles an hour gettin' over there with a bum engine, up a one and a half per cent and one hundred tons over the engine's ratin'. Boss, you're kiddin'. Ya never done it."

"I reckon I don't know when I'm right there on th' train—"

"Yeah, ya know, all right, but you're stretchin' it." Hart was the only one around the office who could talk to him that way and get away with it.

"And if ya'd give us ten minutes on 112 we'd made Riley and then could have come in for that stock train."

"He couldn't made it on ten minutes," disagreed Hart.

"Howdja know he couldn't?"

"Because I give him ten minutes and he didn't," grinned the dispatcher.

The boss looked a bit foolish, but paid no particular attention to the last remark, evidently considering it better to ignore it.

"When I was on a trick," he resumed, "I figured ahead. That's the trouble with you fellows. Ya don't figure far enough ahead. When I fixed a train out of a terminal I done it by scientific methods, and unless something went wrong somewhere I never had to change a meet."

"Now I'll tell one," says Hart, but the boss was already on his way out and paid no further attention to him.

"That," said Hart to the new man, "is the best humor I ever saw him in."

The following day the new man found he had the boss's car on a W.P.9 train. Business was good, mighty good, and, to make matters worse, the management was undecided as to whether they would run two sections of No. 12, the limited east, or hold for the connection reported two hours late. Always the management was undecided on this matter, and it happened two or three times weekly. Sometimes they would run a first section on time and a stub to handle the connection The decision was given from the general manager's office. The dispatcher walked into the chief's office.

"Know yet whether they're goin' to hold or not?"

"Not yet. Expectin' to hear any minute now."

"I gotta get the time out pretty quick if they hold. Of course if they run two sections I can peddle the time on the second section by sendin' it out by the first train, but if they're goin' to hold I got some *hombres* gettin' clost against 'em," he complained.

"Can't say. Tha's all. Letcha know minute I get it."

When one has a busy road and a condition such as the one just described it makes a bad combination. The new man kept his fingers on the trains as well as it could be done. He had Oswego watching for the W.P.9, who stood to make Drummond, a blind siding to the west for the uncertain No. 12. That would be as far as he could make without help, and if he passed Oswego before a decision was reached and then they decided to hold for the connection, it meant No. 12 would be two hours

late and the W.P.9 sewed up. When the waiting operator reported them coming two miles out there had been no word as to what was going to be done and they were cleared. Five minutes after they had passed the Oswego office the chief came in hurriedly.

"They're goin' to hold. Only be one section."

"They would—" said the new man.

"Somebody in th' dark?" the chief asked.

"W.P.9 by Oswego with nothin' on 'em."

"Well," says the chief, "it ain't our fault. We can't help it. Tha's all."

"I coulda got 'em clear in if they'd spoke a few minutes quicker. Well, le's see."

"Make a note of the time ya got th' information," said the chief, going back in his office.

"Le's see," mused the new man. "Le's see," he rang Oswego. "Ya gotta flivver, op?" he asked as the operator answered.

"Uh-huh."

"How clost does th' road run to th' track toward Drummond?"

"Right along th' side of it. All th' way."

"Will ya take one to that W.P.9 that just passed and beat it after him in th' flivver?"

"Sure. If ya say so."

"I do. Copy four for him."

V

THERE had been much speculation by the crew of the W.P.9 as to whether they would get help on No. 12 at Oswego, but when the board swung clear they gave it up.

It was a long, slow drag of seven miles, up hill all the way, and as they trundled along Superintendent Gregg beckoned for the conductor to come down out of the cupola and back to his car. When the captain walked in he inquired:

"Where we goin' for 12?"

"Drummond."

"Didn't get anything on 'em?"

"No, sir."

"I suppose they're on time then, but my dope says the connection is two hours off. Guess they're runnin' a section on time. You'll probably get an order on him givin' ya some time on the second section."

"I reckon we will—"

"Lookit that drunk," says the super, pointing to a flivver racing up the highway behind them, the driver waving his arms. "Oughta be in jail instead of out on the road."

"Sure oughta be." The car passed them easily, on past the long train and now was beyond the engine. "Looks like he's stoppin'," said the conductor. "Damned if he ain't crawlin' through the fence. Looks like a hoop in his hand—"

"Whatinell?" growled Mr. Gregg. The conductor got out on the step where he could see.

"He's givin' one to th' head end," he yelled, and when the rear end came along the conductor was handed his copy. "It's a order. Time on 12."

He read it quickly:

Order 123
C&E Extra 2762 west-Oswego.
No. 12 engine 1426 run two (2) hours late Hanover to Mayberry.

It was properly signed and completed. Just then the whistle sounded for Drummond and the conductor highballed. An answering *toot-toot* sounded from the jack, and they didn't even slow up.

"Le's see that order," demanded Mr. Gregg grimly.

When he had read it he turned to his stenographer.

"Make an exact copy of that," he commanded.

VI

"WELL," said the chief, "ya got th' old man mad atcha already"

"Ya don't know the O. M. very well yet."

"Ya see how it was, dontcha, chief? I didn't get th' infor—"

"Sure. I know it; but the boss ain't goin' to take any answer that'll justify ya steppin' outa th' code of rules; he's a bear on that point."

"When He Read the Note He Bust Out a Laffin'

"How come?" said the new man.

"Looky here," he laid a wire on the table:

> Want personal explanation from dispatcher on duty as to why necessary to deliver the attached order—(123) to extra 2762 west between stations by automobile. Attach reply and have it in my office arrival No. 18 tomorrow.

"That's easy," said the dispatcher. "I'll write it up and lay it on y'r desk when I go home to-night."

"O.K."

And so when the chief came to work next morning the answer was before him as promised, pinned to the original message. He read the short epistle, turned it over and around, then laid it back in his desk. No. 18 was due in at five o'clock and he would have time to get a correction after the new man

came on duty, and when he swung through the door on his way to work the boss nailed him. "Hey," he said, "whatcha tryin' to do—kid somebody?"

"About which?"

"This answer." He brought it out and laid it before him. "Ya don't expect me to take that in to th' boss, do ya?"

"Why not?"

"Why, hell? Ya ain't said anything only a-lotta foolishness. Or, I should say, a little foolishness. I can't show that to him."

"That's all I gotta say. Them's my words, final and complete."

"But there ain't nothin' to 'em! He'll blow up like a balloon an' I won't blame him. Such nonsense. This is supposed to be a business affair."

"In th' words of Napoleon—I have spoken."

"Well, if that's th' way ya feel about it, I'll hand it to him; but I can say now, and without malice aforethought, that you're th' same as canned, fired, discharged an' humiliated. I, also, have spoken."

"Selah," said the other, and went on in to work.

"Of all th' infernal ignorant moves," Mr. Gregg was saying to the chief, "that automobile stunt was the worst; what're we goin' to do when ya don't line your men up to live up to the rules?"

"I didn't know about it until—"

"Of course ya didn't; ya never do. And ya ain't gota man in th' office that knows any more'n you do. Did ya get that personal statement from th' dumbbell?"

"Yes, Mr. Gregg. It ain't satisfactory. I told him it wasn't, but he insisted that was all he had to say. I have it here, but I'm ashamed to show it to ya. If ya can wait, he's just come on duty, I'll make him give us a more constructive and explicit reply—"

"Wait, nothin'! Let's see it." The chief handed it over and watched the expression on the boss's face. The face of the reader grew red, his cheeks puffed out and he seemed on the verge of apoplexy. Then, to the amazement of his companion, he burst into laughter.

"Haw, haw, haw! He, he! Ho, ho, ho! Dawggone—tha's good—where'd ja get this fellow, chief?"

"He called up from Denver and we were short a man. But I can let him go—"

"Like th' devil ya can; keep this bird, and if ya can hire any more like him, do it."

"All right—I—he seemed like a good man an'—"

"You're derned shoutin' he's a good man—er—set in for him a few minutes and send him in. I wanta see him."

"Well," said the chief to Hart, "that beats anything I ever see. I'd a swore he'd a fired this guy, but when he reads that note he busts outa laffin' and has me work while he visits with him."

"What did he say in that reply?" asks Hart.

"That's it—foolest thing I ever read. All he says was this:

> "Used auto because it's so much faster than a mule—hee-haw.
>
> BOOMER SMITH."

"An' the O. M. ain't firin' him, an' just laughed?"

"It's th' Gawd's truth."

"He's gettin' nutty, chief, plumb nutty."

"Yeah," agreed that official. "I reckon that's it."

THE END

No Op in Sight When I Enter, Nobody at All, in Fact

Three Tests and One Trainmaster

Death Lurked and Seniority Took the Count When a Crooked Brass Collar Sneaked to the High Iron

By James W. Earp

ALL the trains were late. The Limited had been twenty minutes off its schedule. The Flyer was more than thirty. Even No. 73, the hottest of the hotshots, which could almost always be depended upon for an on time performance, pulled into the yards a good hour late. The crew on the graveyard shift was at lunch when "Humpy" Cain caught sight of the rear brakeman off 73.

"Have a derailment?" called Humpy. "What happened?"

"Naw, we never had no derailment," replied the brakeman as he paused outside the switch shanty door. "All we had was a straight meet with that ignoramus of a Dawson that was just promoted to trainmaster. He was out making tests to-night and trying to make people think he's a real rail instead of a boneheaded pencil pusher. At Veron he evidently thought it

would be a clever idea to crack a red fusee in the hogger's face as he comes round the curve."

"And the hoghead tears the train up for him?" chuckled "Dustpan" Kelly.

"Naw, the brains did that," grunted the brakeman as he sat down on the bench with a sigh. "I guess the rule book had forgot to tell a trainmaster how to light fusees, because Dawson didn't get his lit until the engine was by him. He was still holding on to it when the caboose comes hopping past at some forty-five per. Old 'Savage' Sam Kelly just takes one look at that red fusee and another one at me and then reaches up to wipe the hands off the air gauge in the caboose. We broke three knuckles and drew a lung before we got stopped."

"Good for Savage!" said Humpy. "And what did his rule book majesty have to say to the broken knuckles and the drawbar?"

The brakeman gestured wearily. "What could he say? He said it was good work because we done what the rule book called for. That's one thing in his favor, I'll say. He's not like old Paine was on the Central Branch. No matter what you did in one of his tests, you were always wrong. He crooked me out of eight years seniority in one of his frame-up tests."

"I lost three months seniority," cut in Humpy. "It was in a test. That Paine was the dirtiest, sneakiest rat that God ever let live, let alone be a trainmaster."

"And the onriest, cheatingest crook that ever stole a man's job!" Dustpan Kelly exclaimed grumpily. "There wasn't an honest bone in his body and he never knew what it was to be on the level with anybody."

"For once I find it possible to heartily concur in all you say," said "Knowitall" Bonner, foreman of the graveyard crew and veteran rail of them all. "Paine was all of that and more. He showed what kind of a man he was with every test he made, with every contact he had with his employees. Such a thing as consideration or justice was as foreign to him as a snowball in Hades."

"Justice!" sneered the brakeman. "He didn't know the meaning of the word. Let me tell you what he did to us the night he tested us and I got fired. Only a man like Paine could have done such a trick, the lousiest stunt I ever heard tell of being pulled on anybody."

"It couldn't beat the one he pulled on us," opined Humpy.

"Nor us!" growled Dustpan.

"It can't beat the one I'm going to tell," protested the brakeman. "I think it must have been about the first of the tricky stunts he pulled over there. He had just been made trainmaster, and Brittenhouse, who was no angel himself, had been made a super over him.

II

"We were on a manifest run this night, the prize freight package of the railroad, which we all called the 'mortgage lifter.' I'm braking ahead. The hoghead is an old-timer who knows his rule book like a bird dog knows birds. He also knows Paine and his reputation.

"'Have to watch our p's and q's from now on,' he says to me. 'Paine is as crooked as a dog's hind leg and then some. I knew him when he was chief clerk for Old Man Sweeter, and he was as crooked then as he dared be. You can't trust him an inch. He has

no more honor than a cur dog with the rabies, and absolutely no principles except bad ones.'

"'He must be a relation of Brittenhouse's,' I replies. 'He certainly can't be no worse.'

Old Savage Sam Takes One Look at That Red Fusee an' Reaches Up to Wipe the Hands Off the Air Gauge in the Caboose

"'He won't be nothing else,' says the hogger. 'Paine is a born snide. And I'll bet that half his time will be spent in the weeds trying out tests that he's been working on for years. Before he leaves here half of us will be gone, if not more. Wait and see if I'm not right.'

"Well, I don't have to wait very long. That same night we run into him at Linwood. The light is out on the order board and both paddles down. The hoghead smiles at me as he pulls up and stops in front of the depot. It's sleety and cold that night, with a mean wind blowing from the north. I climb down off the engine and go into the office to see if the operator is around so I can get a clearance on the board and go on. Otherwise, I got to light the lamp in the semaphore.

"No op is in sight when I enter. Nobody at all, in fact. This is enough to tell me it's a test, because the op is supposed to be on duty at that hour. Outside I go and get ready to climb up the semaphore and light the light.

There's sleet on every rung and I have to kick it off each rung in order to climb up and not fall and break my fool neck. I drop a dozen cuss words on every rung until I get to the top.

"That's where I get peeved for fair. There I am, hanging on with my legs wrapped around the rungs while I reach to take the light from its place. But reach and feel around as I might, I can't find no lamp. Finally I give up and come back down to the ground where the hogger is waiting.

"'Why didn't you light the light?' he wants to know, and I tells him between cuss words.

"'So?' says he, more to himself than to me. 'Well, I must say that this is a new wrinkle on me. Wonder what we're expected to do in a case like this?'

"I don't know myself. Neither does the fireboy. We're talking things over when the O. R. C. arrives. One explanation from me and he makes up his mind.

"'Bend the rail for the passing track,' he orders me. 'We'll get in the clear and wait till the operator shows up. If the officials of the road wants to delay their mortgage lifter it's all right with me. One thing sure, the rule book don't say that we have to carry semaphore lights in the back.'

"'Never mind heading in,' says a voice just then, and around the end of the station comes the sneakingest looking fellow I ever saw in my life. 'This is only a test I'm making. I'm the new trainmaster, Mr. Paine. You may go.'

"But the conductor has heard of Paine as well as the hogger. 'I'm sorry,' says the brains, 'but I'll have to have something more than your word to go on. Either that light will have to be lit or I'll have to have a clearance on the board.'

"'I'll get you a clearance,' offers this sneaky looking gent. 'I don't want the light up. I want to test 23 behind you.'

"Into the office we go while the crook makes out the clearance. Somehow, I can't get over the feeling that there's something crooked behind all this. But when the brains and the hogger take the clearance and pull out, I don't feel called upon to butt in on their business.

"So when we get into the division point the next morning and find a message for us to call at the trainmaster's office, I know then my hunch has been right. I said as much to the brains.

"'We should worry,' he fires back at me. 'We're in the clear. He's got nothing on us.'

"The hogger is of the same opinion. Still I'm not satisfied. I know dirty work is on the hoof, and say so. For that reason I call up the local chairman to represent me at the investigation. The brains and the hogger just laugh at me and refuse to call theirs.

"The first thing Paine says when we show up before him is, 'Do you care to have representatives or will you waive them?'

"'Waive them,' says the brains and the hogger. 'What's the charges?'

"Paine's green eyes turn yellow like a cat that has just seen a mouse. He picks up a paper and beckons a stenog to come over and take notes. From the paper in his hands he reads the charge which has to do with the train order signal at Linwood with the light out.

"'What does the rules say an engineer must do?' he asks the hogger.

"'Stop and obtain a clearance or else see that the light is lit.'

"'And a conductor?' he shoots at the brains.

"The brains repeats the rule perfect. Then I'm asked what's a brakeman's duties. I tell him. He curls his lips.

"'And did you do them?' he hits at me.

"I blink. 'Well, no,' I admit. 'But you said not to.'

"'I said not to,' he sneers. 'I said not to. And you took my word for it. You did not even ask for my credentials. I could have been a robber, a thief, a crook, a highwayman for all you knew. But you took my word for it.'

"I open my mouth to say something and then shuts it again. The griever representing me slips me the big wink on the side as he says in a low voice:

"'Just a moment, Mr. Paine. Will you please ask the brakeman why he took your word for his actions instead of demanding your credentials as a trainmaster?'

"With a snarly look Paine does so. By that time I'm hep to the move, and so I says that I knew Mr. Paine before. He gives me a mean look as he whirls on the brains and the hoghead.

"'I suppose you two fellows knew me, too?' he snaps at them.

"'I did,' answers the hoghead. 'I've pulled Mr. Sweeter many a time when you were chief clerk for him.'

"'Same here,' says the brains.

"Paine looks us all over, the same old cat look in his green eyes. For a second I figure we got him whipped when he slumps in his seat. Finally he straightens up and reaches for a pencil.

"'We'll grant that,' he nods to the stenog. Then he faces the brains and the hogger. 'But does the mere fact that you know me authorize you to accept a clearance from me? What does the rule book say?'

"Right then I saw the hole in the grindstone. So do the hogger and the captain. I know they're licked even before old Paine whips out a rule book and lays it before them.

"'The rule says,' he begins, tapping on the table with his pencil, 'that in a case like that you must obtain a clearance from the operator on duty or else light the light. Doesn't it?'

"We all nod. He leans back in his chair like a man finishing a good meal. 'And the rule means just exactly what it says. Why did you not obtain a clearance from the operator on duty?'

"'Because there wasn't one around on duty?' says the hogger.

"'Oh, but there was,' shoots back Paine. 'The fact is, you fellows did not try to find him. He was in the baggage room all the time. You were not only guilty of negligence, but also gross carelessness. You violated the rules. You have made yourself subject to dismissal. It becomes my unpleasant duty to ask you three men to turn in your company property and get your time checks. The Central Branch cannot, will not tolerate careless employees on its tracks. You are discharged.'

"'Just a minute,' says my griever. 'On what grounds are you firing my man? He was not the conductor on the train.'

"Old Paine's eyes narrow as he looks at the griever. 'He might well have been,' retorts this sneak. 'He is a promoted conductor. He has made extra trips as a conductor. The rules state that all employees involved will be held responsible according to their positions on the train.'

"And there he stuck. All the arguments the griever could bring up, he pushed aside. Finally we all file out. The hogger and brains go looking for

their local chairmen right now. Maybe, if they'd done it before, they'd been better off.

"Anyway, I doubt it. The lodges did take it up. Even the general chairman handled the case. No good came of it. Brittenhouse, the super, stands back of Paine as was to be expected. So does the G. M., old Sweeter himself. Nothing left for us to do but go looking for another job. All our years of service wasted. They meant nothing in Paine's eyes. The only satisfaction I ever got was the day I walked into his office and told him what I thought of a trainmaster whose word was as worthless as his soul."

III

"WHICH he cared for a lot," grunted Humpy Cain. "A lie meant nothing to him if he could get a man's job. He lied to get me fired along with Elmer Miller, the finest old man that ever pulled a throttle on a pig."

"I knew Elmer," Knowitall nodded. "A fine fellow."

"Well, I was with Elmer this night," Humpy went on. "It was so foggy that you couldn't see two car lengths ahead, even with the electric headlight. As usual, Elmer was always careful, but this night he was extra careful, watching out for blocks against him or lights out or what have you, Mr. Paine.

"'Well, that's one night we got by without a test,' Elmer smiles as we pull into the yards. 'Guess it was too bad a night for Water Closet Paine to be out.' The boys had long ago nicknamed Paine, Water Closet.

"You can imagine our surprise the next day to be yanked over to the office. Brittenhouse is sitting in this time. When he asks if we want representatives, we say that we sure do. We know these two crooks too well to trust them far. Finally we get ready and Paine starts in with the investigation

"'The reason for this investigation is to ascertain why you ran a red fusee last night, and on what authority?' says Paine to Elmer.

"'I ran a red fusee?' Elmer repeats. 'I never ran a red fusee in my life.'

"'You ran a red fusee at Loring last night!' Paine barks.

"Elmer shakes his head. 'There was no red fusee at Loring last night. Not when I went by there.'

"Paine hops to his feet, his face all red and purple. 'You mean to say I'm a liar!' he yells.

"'No,' says Elmer. 'But you can be mistaken.'

"'I'm never mistaken,' says Paine all swelled up on himself. 'If I was I wouldn't be a trainmaster here. And I say you ran a red fusee at Loring, last night at exactly 12.25 A.M. I was there. I know.'

"'Then it wasn't on my side of the track,' says Elmer.

"'Your side of the tracks!' Paine whoops. 'What do you mean your side of the tracks? Let me tell you, Miller, both sides of the track are your sides of the track. And this red fusee was on the fireman's side of the track, which also happens to be your side as well when it comes to responsibility.'

"Here the representatives and them lock horns. Old Brittenhouse horns in with Paine and they have it hot and heavy. But it's no use. Rules is rules with them, and the grievers can't do a thing. Then they turn on me.

"'Where were you in passing through Loring?' Paine wants to know.

"'On the fireman's seatbox,' I says,

all hostile like. 'And there was no fusee at Loring on our side.'

"'Nary one,' adds the fireboy. 'I was on the seat until we passed all the switches. I know.'

"This calls for another rumpus all around. Old Brittenhouse gets in and calls us liars and everything else he could think of. He swears by all that's holy that he was there with Paine when the fusee was burning, and that we went by while it was burning.

"'And you're all fired!' he winds up with. 'I might have overlooked the passing of a red fusee, but I won't overlook lying to me. You're all fired!'

"We were. No argument about it. Me, I haven't got much seniority, so I don't care. I'd about made up my mind to go switching where I wouldn't have to be bothered with testing trainmasters and such. So just before we leave, I turns to Brittenhouse and Paine, and says:

"'When we all die and I'm seeing you two fellows in hell begging for a glass of water, don't expect anything from me but a pitchfork in the caboose. But I do want to say that in all my railroading I never met two such cheap sports as you two dubs. You both don't know enough to carry a hod, let alone run a railroad.'

"Did they go wild? They sure did. But I don't care. I skip out while they're still trying to tell me I'm fired. Like you boys, the lodges did try to get the others back, but no luck. Same old story of Sweeter sticking by his super and T. M. Personally, I didn't care about myself, but I sure felt sorry for Elmer Miller. I often wondered what became of him."

"I think I can ease your mind there," spoke up Knowitall again. "Elmer was reinstated after Paine left there and Brittenhouse died, which happened soon after. He was also paid full time for the months he was off. So were the others."

"Well, I'm darned glad to hear it," said Humpy. "Elmer was a fine fellow. My one regret in life has been that I didn't bust Brittenhouse and Paine on the jaw before I left their offices that day of the investigation."

"Well, that's one thing I can say about the Central Branch," grinned Dustpan Kelly. "I left there with no regrets at all. And I resigned as well. To date I'm pretty well satisfied with the way I settled old scores with Paine."

"How's that?" demanded Humpy. "What did you do?"

"I did a plenty," chuckled Dustpan. "It was in one of Paine's smart Aleck tests. I was braking ahead at the time. Chub Cameron was the hogger. Dinky Sullivan was the tallowpot. Bingle was the captain of the hack, a percentage man who had only been on the job a short time, and barely able to hold a job on the brakeman's extra board.

"But this night he is running. We have the Coast Express, which is permitted a speed of forty-five miles an hour on the time card as against thirty-five allowed the other trains. And I beg leave to tell you that old Chub is not loafing any at all when we come around that curve at Calhoun Bluff."

"I know that curve," broke in the brakeman. "I was on the work train which helped put in the breakwater to hold the river back. They put in a cross over switch there so we could go from one main track to the other without going ten miles to the next town to switch back."

"That's the place," said Dustpan. "Well, that was where Paine was testing this night. He had turned the light

red on the switch, but without throwing the switch, for his test that night. You can imagine what happened when we whip around that curve at forty-five per or better and see that red light on the switch. I tried to yell, and all I got out of it was to swallow my chew of tobacco.

"Talk about being scared! Say, I was paralyzed for the length of time it took the fireboy to throw his shovel out of the window over my head and make a jump out the gangway. The fact that I don't follow on his heels is because he kicks me in the stomach as he shoots out into the darkness and puts me flat on the apron. To make matters worse he kicks open the valve on the squirt hose as well.

"I try to follow, but don't make it. The chain on the leg of the tank is to be thanked or blamed for that. It catches me and holds me kicking while that hose plays a stream of hot water on the seat of my pants, and with me kicking and yelling forty kinds of bloody murder. To this day I don't like that song about there being a hot time in the old town to-night. It make me think of scalding water.

"Then and there I give myself up for lost. All I was sorry of was that I didn't have more life insurance for Mary and the kid. I'm trying to tear myself loose, and hoping we won't go into the river on my side when I discover that we've stopped and the river is still on the other side of the other track. About the same time my coat-tails give way and I bump down the steps to the ground. I turn around to find the engineer at my side. He's as white as a sheet and shaky all over. I'm no Rock of Gibraltar myself just then.

"'It's not fair!' he half sobs. 'That's not a fair test. We might have been killed by jumping. Maybe the fireman is.'

IV

"Back up the track we go to see. We don't have far to go. The eagle-eye had done a mighty fast job of stopping. The sand on the track told me that much. We find the tallow curled up in a heap by a pile of ties which he has side-swiped for a complete knockout. He's covered with blood, and for a moment we think he's dead. We carry him to the engine and the hoghead goes for his torch while I get some water and tear up part of my shirt.

Just as we start to work on the tallow, who comes up but Paine himself. He doesn't even look at the fireboy stretched out there, but jumps on Chub.

"'Why did you run past that switch?' he demands of Chub. 'Why didn't you stop as required by the rules?'

"'I couldn't,' Chub replies. 'I'm sorry, Mr. Paine, but I did the best I could'

"'You didn't do enough!' says this wonderful official. 'You call at the office to-morrow and turn in your company property. If we pay men to be engineers, they've got to be engineers.'

"He pauses. For the first time he sees the tallow. Then: 'What's the matter with him? Did he faint from fright?'

"Something seemed to snap inside of me then. I think I must have went crazy. One hop and I'm close to him. He looks up, and when he does I let drive the good old Mary Ann for his jaw. He goes down like he'd been kicked by an army mule. The squeal he let out of him when I hit him made me think of a scared hog.

"'Don't!' Chub begs, grabbing my fist. 'Don't do that. It will get you fired at the investigation.'

"I shook his arm loose. 'There ain't gonna be no investigation!' I yell. 'I'm going to kill the skunk right here. The only fellow who'll be interested when I'm through with him is the coroner.'

"By this time Paine is on his feet again. I jerk loose from Chub and sock the old boy again for a fall. This time he doesn't try to get up. Just lays there and whimpers like the cur dog that he is.

"'Get up!' I order him. 'Get up, or so help me God, I'll stomp your ugly face into the ground!'

"'You're fired,' he whines. 'You're discharged as soon as I get to the office.'

"'You'll never see your office!' I tell him. 'All you can do is say your prayers and get ready to die. And if you don't get up so I can hit you, I'll climb on you and choke you to death.'

"Does he get up? He does not. He begins to yell for help at the top of his voice. I reached down and yanked him to his feet and wallop him with one hand while I hold him up with the other. I'm on my third wallop when somebody jerks me loose and Paine falls to the ground again.

"'It's my turn now,' says a voice. 'Stand aside.'

"Bingle is doing the talking. I take one look at him and stand aside. In all my life I never saw such a look on a human being's face. Bingle is nothing but a madman.

"'Get up, you dog!' Bingle says to Paine. 'It isn't often I stoop to mess with a mangy cur, but this is one time it is needed. Get up!'

"Paine gets up. Not to fight, but to run. Down the track Bingle and the trainmaster go like a greyhound and a rabbit. They disappear around the curve and are lost to view. Some twenty minutes later Bingle comes back, all out of breath and looking rather peaked in the face. By that time we've got the fireboy brought around. He's got two broken ribs and a busted collar bone. No use expecting him to do any more work that night.

"'Call in the flag!' says Bingle. 'We'll head in at Greenville. Got to get this left arm of mine set. It's broken. You almost killed us making that stop, Chub. And the caboose is a wreck.'

"As soon as the flag gets in we hurry to Greenville. There we head in and leave the train while a doctor fixes Bingle up and sends the tallow to the hospital for a two months' stay or more. I sent in my resignation by wire. So does Bingle. I went back to K. C. on the first train to get my time check. Once I had it I didn't bother about service papers. Didn't want them from a railroad with such officials as Paine and Brittenhouse."

Dustpan got to his feet, his face twitching. Twice he made the trip up and down the length of the little shanty before he sat down again. No one spoke. They understood his feelings.

"You know," said Dustpan as he sat down again, "I never will forget that night. I'll never be able to forget, much less forgive Paine. It may be wrong, but I hate him even to this day. One of the happiest days of my life was when I heard that they had canned him. I never knew why, but I'd bet it was on account of his crooked work. He caused more sorrow, worked more hardships on hard working honest men and little children, and did more mean

things than the devil himself. I've often wondered why God let such creatures live."

V

KNOWITALL looked up at this and reached for his plug of navy

"Perhaps," said the sage of the switch shanty, "it is because he wishes to teach others more worth while a lesson. We may be all powerful and free agents, but when we strike at the welfare of our fellow men, retribution overtakes us in an awful way."

"Well, it's been damned slow overtaking him!" swore the brakeman.

"Not at all," Knowitall denied "Bad deeds like chickens come home to roost. Paine's all came home at a time in life when he could least stand them." He turned to Humpy. "Your Elmer Miller helped."

Humpy stared. "He did?"

"He did," said Knowitall as he drove a stream of amber-colored juice at the open door of the old switch shanty. "The night that Elmer was fired was the beginning of Paine's downfall. If you remember, Brittenhouse, the superintendent, testified that he was with Paine that night?"

"He sure did," Humpy vouched. "And it went down on the records."

"And the local chairman for the engineers found out later that Brittenhouse was at a show that night in company with the mayor of the city and his wife and two aldermen. Brittenhouse was in the hospital, not expected to live after an operation, when they

This Time He Doesn't Try to Get Up; Just Lays There an' Whimpers

made the discovery. Nevertheless, they sent, not for General Manager Sweeter, but the president of the road himself. When the smoke cleared away Brittenhouse had died, Paine was fired, and Sweeter had gone to the D. & R. G."

"Well, I'll be darned!" exclaimed Humpy. "I didn't know that. How did you learn it?"

Knowitall smiled. "I was working for them at the time it happened. I left there shortly afterward to come here, but not before I saw all things made right."

"Did you ever hear of Paine again?" asked Dustpan.

"Once," mused Knowitall. "And I saw him twice, both times by accident. The first time I saw him was one day when I was with Charlie Shellenberger, a conductor off the Frisco. I was going home with Charlie for lunch.

"'I'll have to drop into the bank to get some money,' Charlie said to me. 'It won't take a minute.'

"Into the bank we go. Charlie is getting his money when who comes out of the president's office but Paine himself. He did not know me, but I knew him. To my surprise he stopped to pat Charlie on the back and speak to him. A moment later Charlie introduced me.

"'Mr. Paine and I have met before,' I said coldly, putting my hands in my pockets. 'You'll pardon my not seeming enthusiastic at the meeting.'

"Paine turned all kinds of colors and mumbles something about an engagement. When we were outside Charlie asked me my reasons for the snubbing. I told him, and I did not spare him.

"'So that's his pedigree, eh?' said Charlie grimly. 'Well, a fellow like that can't handle my money. A man who won't shoot square with his employees and fellow men certainly can't be expected to be fair with his depositors. I'm getting my money out of the bank right now.'

"And Charlie did, while I was still with him. From what I heard afterward, Charlie peddled the story right and left."

The brakeman snorted. "Too bad they couldn't have busted his old bank!"

"Perhaps they did," said Knowitall. "It was only a year or so later when I saw in the paper that one W. C. Paine, formerly trainmaster for the Central Branch, now president of the Union Trust and Terminal Bank, had been indicted by the Federal grand jury for misappropriation of funds. A year after that he was sentenced to serve twenty years in prison. At his trial it was brought out that he had loaned himself money under an alias on some worthless land in Texas."

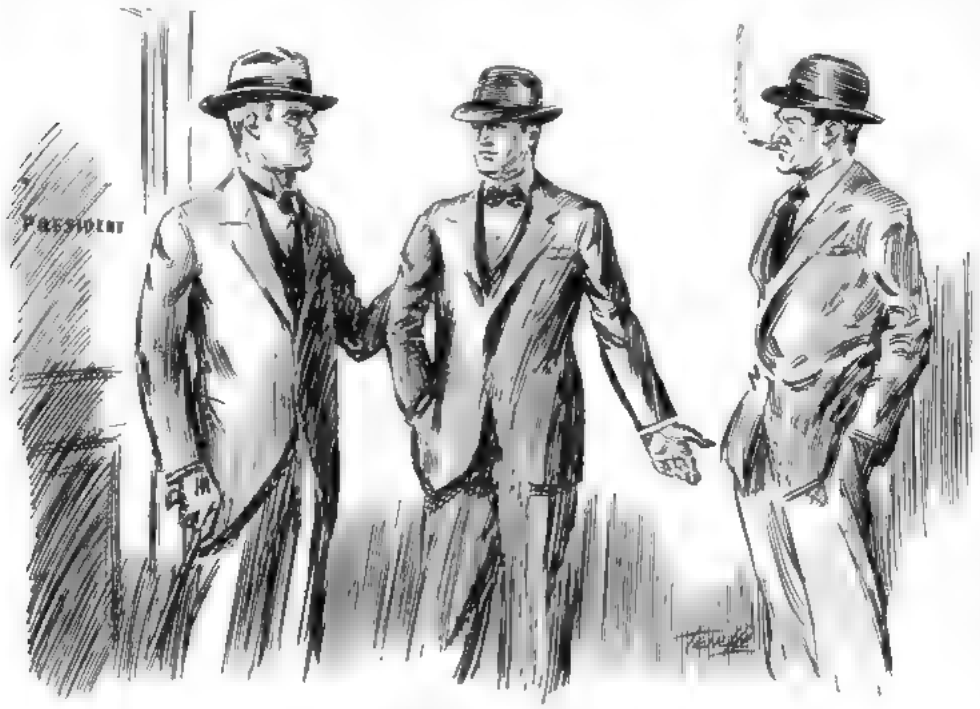
"He would do that kind of work," grunted the brakeman. "But is he still in prison?"

"He was there last summer," replied Knowitall. "The wife and I happened to be in the town on visiting day, and she insisted on seeing through the prison. Paine was there. I saw him. And I can assure you that he is not having an easy time of it. His sins have found him out even in prison."

"That's good news," said Humpy. "The best I've heard for a long time."

"And me," added the brakeman. "He's the only railroad official I ever knew that was downright crooked. Of course, lots of them are ignorant, like Dawson, but if they're honest you can forgive a lot. I don't object to a test that is done on the level."

"Dawson would never dare do otherwise on this road," said Knowitall. "Our officials higher up are too fine and honorable to permit crooked work. The same could not be said of those above Paine. Look at Brittenhouse. Look at Sweeter and the scandal he got mixed up with on the road he was on as vice president."



"Mr Paine and I Have Met Before," I Said Coldly

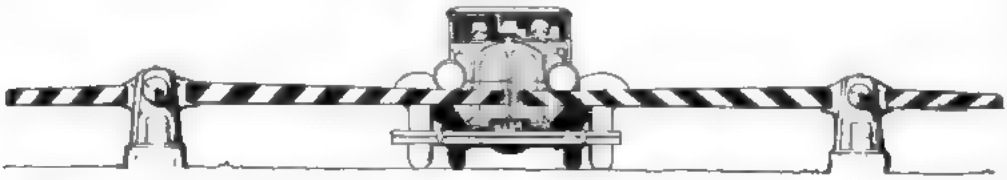
"I remember that," said the shack.

Knowitall nodded, his eyes on the cast-iron stove. Another deluge and another bull's-eye, then a comment that was almost a sermon:

"Tests don't always show up bad against the employee. Sometimes they show up worse against the official. And crooked work like bad pennies always come home to the doer. Big men in big places are usually wise men and good men. They know that a man who cannot shoot square with his fellow men and employees cannot be expected to shoot square with those above him."

Knowitall paused to look at his watch and grin. "And here we have already cheated the company out of ten minutes of labor. Everybody outside and hit the ball to make it up. We must treat the company right."

"And how!" grinned Humpy as he went for the goat.



Malley from the Hill

By Warren Blakely

I'M a rumbling, grumbling Malley from the hill,
I've got fifty hot shot reefers in my train,
The customers are howling,
And the G M.'s started growling—
These delays will drive the Super half insane.

For I tied up all the traffic through the pass,
While dispatchers burned the wires up down below;
Say, the hoghead fumed and cursed,
While the brakies did their worst
When I broke in two at Summit in the snow.

I've got a car of cattle from Cheyenne:
I've got a million apples for the boats,
They will eat them in Japan,
They will eat them in Siam—
The Y. M. 'd better hurry with the goats.

Call out your extra rattler for the north,
And put that southbound transfer on the spot;
Get the cartoads on the job,
Can't you hear that flat wheel throb?
And I've got a stinking hot box that is HOT!

All the Brass Hats raise a howl when I am late,
Mudhops cuss me when I whistle on the wye,
But my hogger prays to God,
When they plant him 'neath the sod,
He can take a hot shot Malley to the sky!

A Large Open Railroad Station at Corinto, Nicaragua

Nicaragua Lures the Boomer

The Wandering Son of the Rails May Find New Fields to Conquer Down Beneath Tropic Skies

By Lieut. Charles E. Chapel, U. S. M. C.

THE "boomer" may be singing his swan song in the United States, but in countries to the south of us he can find a welcome field for his labors. As Latin American countries develop their agriculture and commerce, the demand for railroads and railroad men increases. Trained American eagle-eyes, smoke agents, cons, and shacks are as welcome as the flowers that bloom in the spring.

This is especially true of those countries, such as Nicaragua, where American investments have paved the way for the entrance of American goods and American labor. Here the boomer can usually find something to do until he is ready to take passage on a steamer for another of the little banana republics. If he finds the climate agreeable, the food tolerable, and the black eyes of the *señoritas* alluring, he may even toss up his boomer status and join the ranks of the home guards.

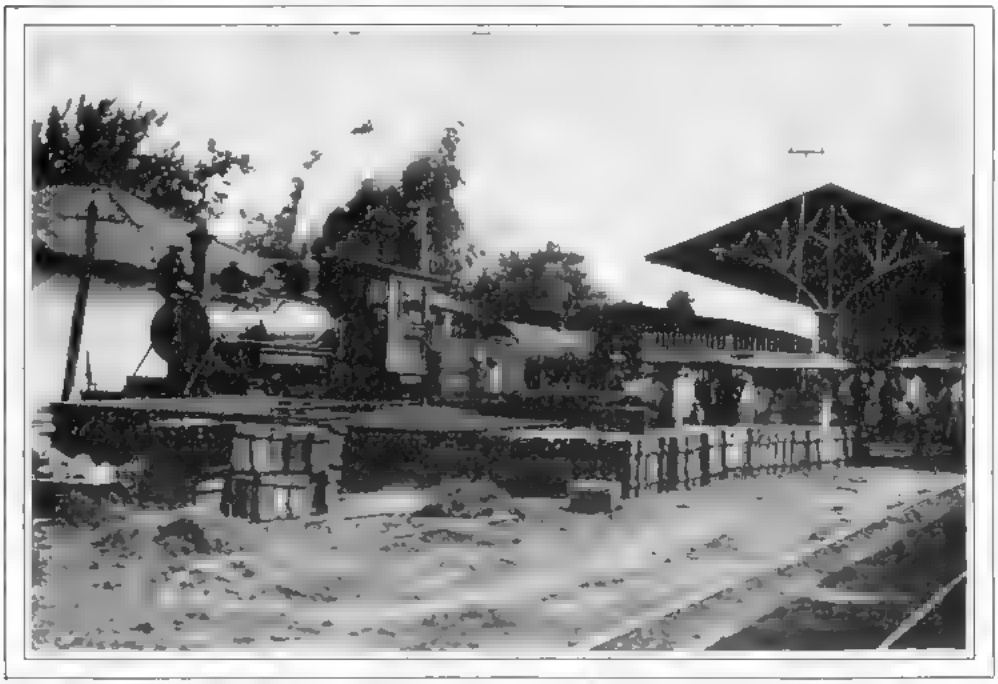
The principal railroad in Nicaragua is the Ferrocarril del Pacifico de Nicaragua, in other words the Pacific Railroad of Nicaragua. It is pacific in name only; governments have quar-

reled over its revenues, and many lives have been lost in capturing or defending its roadbed. Perhaps some veteran railroad men would say that it is also a railroad in name only; its personnel and rolling stock certainly have provided more laughs than the famous Toonerville Trolley.

According to an official statement the equipment "consists of sixteen locomotives, eighty-three box cars, twenty-three flat cars, nine stock cars, nine tank cars, one water tank car, two cabooses, five first-class coaches, fourteen second-class coaches, one combination coach, seven baggage cars, two chair cars, and two special coaches." The same statement also adds the remark that "oil is used for fuel." The author has no desire to quarrel with statistics, but he has seen little oil except that "burned" by the shacks who spit copiously at any convenient target, sleeping natives or signboards proclaiming the merits of "Cerveza Llave," a popular brand of beer

Use Mahogany Ties

The railroad connects Corinto, the only west coast seaport of importance, with the little cities of Leon, Managua, Masaya, and Granada, and the small towns in the coffee country. The road has one hundred and forty-six miles of operating track and ten miles of yards and sidings. It is dirt ballasted and uses ties made of native woods, such as mahogany. The gauge is forty-two inches; for nearly thirty miles fifty-pound rails are used, and on the rest of the track forty-pound rails. In Managua there are completely equipped shops that employ from one hundred to one hundred and fifty men, and handle castings of nearly half a ton. These shops can build cars, but much of the rolling stock was cast off by railroads in the United States.



The Nicaraguan National Railway, the One and Only of Which the Country Boasts

An Old Wood Burner Leaves the Rail and Takes to the Woods

Railroad men in the United States may start a stampede for Nicaragua when they learn that alcohol is so plentiful down there that it is used as a fuel for locomotives on a short line. Strange as it may seem, it is true; this unusual state of affairs exists on the Nicaragua Sugar Estates, which have six miles of forty-two inch track, connecting their sugar plant with the main line, and seven miles of twenty-four inch line through the fields of sugar cane. The forty-two inch line equipment consists of three locomotives, one of which, "Old Toper," uses alcohol for fuel; fifteen cane cars, five flat cars, and one passenger coach. The two-foot line has two wood burners and fifty cane cars. From forty to fifty men take care of the house and the road, and can handle two-hundred-pound castings in the back shop. This sugar estate branch line and the Pacific Railroad constitute the entire system of the west coast of Nicaragua. Before we take a look at the east coast lines let us take an imaginary trip from Corinto to Granada.

Corinto is a good sample of tropical seaports. It lies sweating and stinking on a baking beach, on an arm of the landlocked bay. Wrinkled Indian women squat beside baskets of avocadoes and lemons, dusky damsels patter slowly past with bundles balanced on their kinky heads. The only sign of life is on the dock, where creaking engines propel bundles of cargo from a ship to a flat car on the pier. At the end of the dock are warehouses with galvanized roofs and adobe walls that smell to heaven of coffee and rum. In the distance are palm trees and the ever present volcano, that spouts black smoke into the pale blue sky.

Corinto comes to life just as the sun disappears into the Pacific. Old residents say that they set their clocks by the sun, so regular are its movements. The whole town wakes up, shutters are

A Cant'na, the Combination Dance Hall and Saloon Found in Every Little Town

opened, doors unbarred, and every one goes down to the dock to promenade up and down. All shades of society are there, from the dark, barefooted *mozo* to the olive-skinned *caballero* with his uncomfortable, imported, mail-order clothes.

The swell head of the Pacific Railroad easily shares honors with the skipper of the steamer that happens to be in port this particular day, and the Casey Jones up on the goat takes no back seat from any of the ship's officers, for the railroad and the steamship line share fifty-fifty in the public eye. As they stroll up and down in their white ducks they cast appraising eyes at the *señoritas* and select the ones whom they will honor with their company at the *fandango* which is to be held after dinner.

Corinto at night is a joyous place. From the Hotel Central comes the dulcet tune of a marimba band as shacks and fireboys lead their dusky partners through stately waltzes that would be laughed off the boards in "God's Country." In a near-by *cantina* the clicking of castanets and the stamping of feet to the music of guitar and mandolin tell of a native *fandango*, while a few doors away an American phonograph blares forth the latest jazz from Tin Pan Alley. The air is heavy with the smell of orange blossoms. Corinto forgets the heat and toil of the day in the music and fragrance of the evening.

Hitting the Main Line

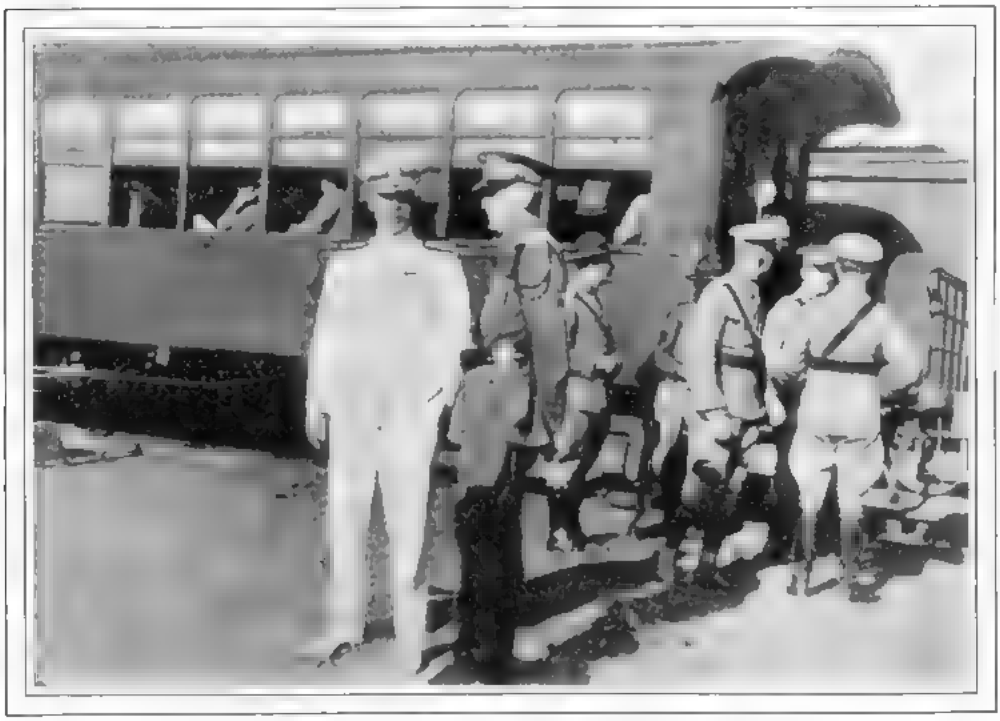
There are no sleepers on the Pacific Line, but the train starts at crack of dawn to avoid the heat of the day. We choke down a breakfast of cold beans, *tortillas* covered with honey, and coffee served with hot milk. As we walk to the station our eardrums are nearly split open by the air-ripping sounds of crying beggars, rumbling, squeaking ox carts, and cursing mule skinners. We find that an ancient teakettle is already tied to a train of discarded

American cars, the smoke-agent has her lined up, and the brains is waiting for us to arrive before giving a high-ball.

With more jingling of brass and blowing of whistles than was ever heard on an American line, the train gets under way through the hush of the jungle that borders the town. Mule trains cross our track, and servant women swing past with baskets on their heads. The old pig puffs through coconut groves and canebrakes, across an old salt marsh, and over a bridge that spans an inlet of the sea.

Unfortunately our train has the characteristics of the butter and egg runs in the States. At every little village and flag station we stop as long as the skipper and the eagle-eye find necessary for the transaction of their personal business. If the freight agent happens to be awake and sober we may couple on a freight car; if that worthy feels indisposed the matter can be attended to *mañana*. In this land of languor and leisure there is no apparent reason for worrying about train orders and waybills. Even my old friend Kelly, one time of the Southern Pacific, has learned to say *Quien sabe?* (Who knows?) as well as the greasiest native when I ask him embarrassing questions about schedules.

Natives of Nicaragua will tell you proudly that the Ferrocarril del Pacifico once arrived on time, but they are careless about supplying details. The truth is that the train happened to be carrying government troops to the relief of the besieged city of Chinandega, and also carried a Marine guard to protect the rolling stock, for at that time the entire railroad was owned by American interests. All went well until the troop train came within gunshot



Day Coaches Make Up the String of Varnish Which Haul These Troops

Back of the Yards. Note the Straw Stack at the Left where the Brakemen Get Their Spot

of Chinandega. Some one gave a washout, a fusillade of bullets swept through the train, and the eagle-eye joined the eagles. Evidently the shack and the smoke-agent unloaded, too, for they were not seen again for several days. Fortunately, however, some one wiped the slate and the train came to a sudden stop

The native troops threw themselves on the floor of their cars and made themselves as small as possible. The Marines opened fire and held off the enemy attack, but finding themselves badly outnumbered, they were anxious to get out of the neighborhood as quickly as possible. The officer in charge of the guard called for volunteers to man the locomotive. One of the men ceased firing and approached the officer. It was Dick Richards, one time boomer, but now on a four-year "vacation" with the United States Marines.

Embarkment of the Marines on the Train at Corinto

"I can bring her in, lieutenant, if you'll give me Flynn for a fireman," he told the young officer in charge of the guard. In a few seconds Flynn was down in the kitchen fogging up the atmosphere and Sergeant Richards was highballing her.

With White Feather

All real heroes are willing to admit being scared either at the time of trouble or afterward. Both Richards and Flynn admit that they were too scared to stop until the train was several miles on the other side of Chinandega. According to their story they kept on going until they reached Corinto, coupled on a carload of new rifles waiting for them on a siding, and returned to Chinandega in time to check in on the register. Richards strode into the station, twisted the agent's nose, and, in his best barroom Spanish, informed him:

"Train No. 29 has arrived on time for the first time in the history of the railroad."

The laxities of the Nicaraguan railroad are interesting when one takes his first run; after that they are apt to prove irritating. At each little station Indian women offer delicious drinks made of chocolate, powdered corn and water, which they serve in colored cups made from gourds. Hunters from the forests in the distant mountains display hides of antelope and jaguar, while others tempt the traveler with belts and purses made from alligator hide. Mahogany, cedar, and cocobola logs are stacked in fragrant piles along the track. A hundred sights, sounds, and smells regale the stranger, but the native passengers are bored with it all, and doze fitfully with their heads against the windows, or stare vacantly at advertisements of pills that claim to cure corns and coughs, and scare away *los diables azules*—the blue devils.

Map Showing the Location of the One Railroad in Nicaragua

The chair car is often full of young *señoritas* going to Corinto to take a steamer to the United States or to Europe for the completion of their education. They are as pretty as any women in the world, but the old Spanish custom of requiring women to do nothing but eat and sleep and go to church is not conducive to their retaining a youthful figure for many years. However, most of those who go to the United States return to shock the older generation by playing tennis and basketball, and wearing short skirts that reveal neatly embroidered French things.

Granada, the prettiest city of Nicaragua, is at the end of the line. Here pirates once came to dress their wounds and divide their loot; here ships from Europe once brought costly cargoes of silk and satin before the

Looking Down the Main Stem of Managua, the Hotel Is on the Extreme Right

San Juan River changed its course. Granada's glory as a commercial center is no more, but she still maintains her standing as a city of romance and beauty. Within her thick-walled houses are tiled patios, where tinkling fountains play beside well-tended gardens

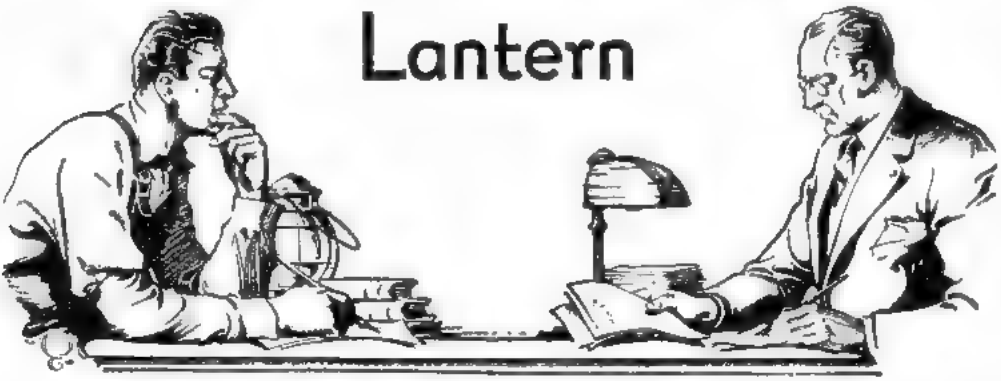
The train arrives in Granada late in the afternoon; to-morrow we can board the railroad company's steamer, the Victoria, and steam across Lake Nicaragua to the head of the San Juan River, where we can transfer our baggage to a river lighter and eventually reach the Atlantic.

The Victoria is an ancient, flat-bottomed paddle wheeler which has weathered all the winds and revolutions for the past quarter of a century. She proudly displays bullet holes in her side as proof of her war service With even a slight breeze the old veteran of the storms creaks and groans and wallows in the water as though she might turn over any minute. For those who want to reach the Atlantic coast there is no other means of transportation worth considering, except a long, expensive passage in a steamer by way of the Panama Canal.

The joining of North and South America by rail, by way of Central America, has been discussed for many years. The proposed route appears on many maps of Central America. This great project would be accomplished partly by extending already existing lines and connecting them with one another.

The demand for transportation between the two coasts of Nicaragua will result in much new construction in the near future. A battalion of United States Army Engineers are now surveying the route of the proposed canal for which we already own the right of way. If a canal is to be built it will first be necessary to build a railroad to haul supplies. If a canal is not built in the near future a transcontinental railroad will, perforce, then become necessary.

By the Light of the Lantern



WE want to be as useful as possible to our readers, but, because of the great popularity of this department, we are obliged to impose certain restrictions. It is limited to the answering of questions of an informative, technical, or historical nature only. Letters concerning positions WILL NOT be answered. All letters should be signed with the full name of the writer, as an indication of his good faith. We will print only his initials. The editor begs that readers sending in questions will not be disappointed if the answers do not appear as early as expected. Delays are often unavoidable for two reasons: the magazine is printed two months in advance of the date of issue, and it frequently takes weeks to secure correct answers, owing to the complexity of the questions.

COULD you please tell me to settle an argument what has become of two old railroads? I would like to know what line has bought them over: Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railway, running out of Memphis; East Tennessee, Virginia & Georgia in Tennessee.—A. R., Toronto, Ont.

It is our understanding that the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Southern Railroad was leased by the Rock Island in 1904 for a period of 999 years. We believe that the East Tennessee, Virginia & Georgia was either leased or purchased by the Southern Railway many years ago.

IS there any railroad around Red Bluff, California, that is using large engines with the tenders in front of them instead of in the rear? Or has there ever been a railroad like that? A man here says he has seen them, but I don't believe there are any such engines.—F. A. N., Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas

Your friend wins the argument. The Southern Pacific has a number of these locomotives which are running forward when they are going backward. They are so constructed that the cab end is the head end; the tank follows the pilot which is at the rear end. This is possible because these engines are oil burners, and it doesn't matter about the tender being next to the cab. They use these engines because of the terrific tunnels and the smoke peril to the engine crew. By adopting this system the Southern Pacific has found that the engine crew always has a clear vision ahead, and the cabs are inclosed so that they are comfortable under any kind of weather conditions. These engines are operated only in the Sierras.

I WILL greatly appreciate any information you can give me regarding the duties of a railway traffic inspector. Could a man with no railroad experience make good at that profession? I am thinking of taking a correspondence course in that field.—M. W., Matador, Texas

We have never heard of railway traffic inspectors. The New York Central has a man designated as "General Agent" on the staff of the vice-president, passenger traffic. He rides trains and keeps an eye on service in the passenger department. The general superintendent of passenger service has two "inspectors of passenger service" who also ride trains to see that everything is shipshape. Inspection duties pertaining to freight traffic are performed by trainmasters.

Other railroads have similar arrangements. But these are all highly specialized jobs; they cannot be filled by persons without experience and lots of it.

IN the January issue of the *Railway Age* the American Locomotive Company stated that the N. Y. C. K-5 locomotives, with 25 x 28 cylinders and 200-pound pressure, have a horse power of 3,200. The J-1, with 25 x 28

cylinders and 225-pound pressure, have a horse power of 4,075. Can you tell me how these horse powers are developed? The only way I can figure is .0229 x 25 x 28 equals horse power which comes out as 2,252 and 2,540 respectively

(2) Have not the Virginian Railroad locomotives 2-10-10-2 and 2-8-8-8-4 a larger horse power than the Northern Pacific locomotive?

(1) The horse powers of the K-5 and J-1 locomotives of the American Locomotive Company's advertisement were obtained by using the drawbar pull actually secured in a dynamometer test, then transforming this drawbar pull to tractive power, and then changing this tractive power to horse power by the use of the formula IHP equals TP x speed divided by 375. The great increase between the actual horse power of the J-1 over that of the K-5 is due to much better boiler design in the J-1 engine.

(2) No, the Northern Pacific or "Yellowstone" type locomotive has a greater horse power than the 2-10-10-2 or the 2-8-8-8-4 due to much better boiler design.

A. P. R., Vancouver, Wash.—All of the transcontinental trains in the Northwest have the same time, both east bound and west bound. The North Coast Limited perhaps averages a little faster because its mileage is a little longer. Nothing much to speak of, however

(2) The Northern Pacific passenger engine you ask about is evidently the mountain type, capable of a speed up to eighty miles an hour according to grade and hauling conditions.

(3) The famous limited trains of the New York Central and Pennsylvania Railroad use coal burning locomotives

F. R. H., Oxford, Ala.—The mileage of the Southern Railway System is 8,053; the L. & N., 5,286; the Seaboard Air Line, 4,500, and the Central of Georgia, 1,921 miles.

(2) There is not much choice among these roads when it comes to the largest locomotive.

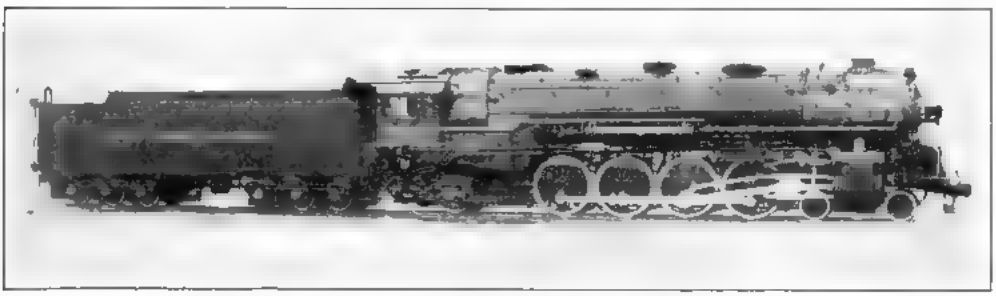
S. B., Chicago, Ill.—Driving wheels without flanges such as you have seen on passenger engines of the Pennsylvania Railroad have no particular explanation. In these engines there are groups of three or more driving wheels connected together. It has been found that there is practically no side strain on the inner wheels. They just don't need tires.

R. D., Rochester, N. Y.—The New York Central Mohawk engine, illustrated here, was built by the American Locomotive Company. It is a bigger engine. Driving wheels, 69 inches; weight on driving wheels, 245,000 pounds; weight of engine and tender in working order, 675,000 pounds. It carries steam at 225 pounds pressure, with a total boiler area of 4,555 square feet; superheater area, 1,931 square feet. The cylinders are 27 x 30 inches. Total tractive force of the 2800 class Mohawk, 60,620 pounds; plus tractive force of the booster, 12,400 pounds—total, 73,020 pounds

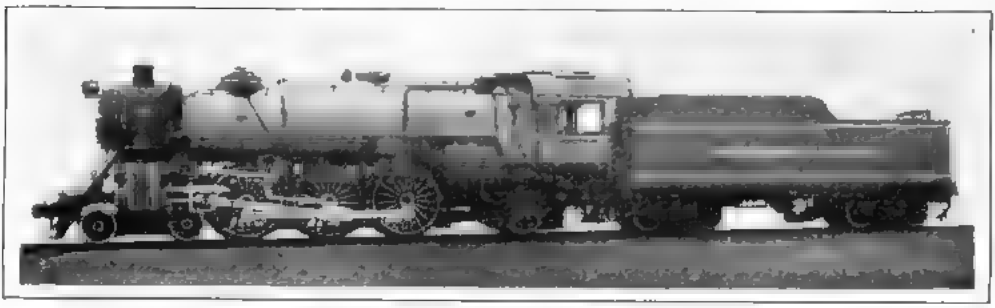
R. G., Phoenix, Ariz.—The L. & N is not planning any new terminal improvements at Covington. At Cincinnati this railroad is uniting with various other railroads in the new Cincinnati Union Terminal

(2) From Jacksonville to Miami via the new Moultrie Cut-off of the Florida East Coast Railway is 346 miles. All the fast passenger and freight service is routed over this cut-off. The main line is now 522 miles long.

L. J. D., Washington, D. C.—The Pacific type "president" locomotives of the B & O were built in 1927 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works. One of them is illustrated in this department: Diameter of driving wheels, 72 inches; weight (working order) on driving wheels, 201,000 pounds; total weight of engine and tender, 540,000 pounds; steam pressure,



The Mohawk Type—a Freight Engine on the N. Y. C.



The B. & O.'s President Type Passenger Engine

230 pounds; total area of boiler tubes, 3,846 square feet; area of superheater, 932 square feet; cylinders, 27 x 28 inches; tractive force, 50,000 pounds. It is sometimes equipped with a booster, giving an additional tractive force of 11,000 pounds—total 61,000 pounds.

TRAIN ORDERS AND RULES
(Answered by G. W. Plantz)

A PIECE of main line runs from A to H. First 275 is ready to leave A at 2 A.M. Second 275 is scheduled to leave A about 3 A.M.

Engine 3037 is ordered for 1 A.M. extra east from H to A, and the following order (No. 2) is put out to engine 3037 and to first and second No. 275:

> Engine 3037 will run extra east H to A and will have right over first No. 275 engine 3003, H. to C, and right over second No. 275, engine 3032, C to B.

The extra clears H at 1.05 A.M. and immediately falls down on his time, while the 275's move right along. The dispatcher then puts out the following order to the first No. 275 at B, and to the extra east at G.

> First 275, engine 3003, wait at D until 3.40 A.M. for Extra 3037.

Nothing was said about annulling any part of the first order No. 2, and the conductor on the extra refused to accept the order at G.

Now, should this have been handled both by the crew and the dispatcher? You will notice that nothing was changed as regards the extra's rights over the second No. 275. Also—under what rule would this situation come?—C. A., Spokane, Wash.

By definition a "superior train" is one having precedence over another train. A "train of superior right" is one given precedence by a train order. Rule 71 provides: "A train is superior to another train by right, class or direction. Right is conferred by train order; class and direction by time table. Right is superior to class or direction." Under train order this is example C (2):

> Extra 37 east has right over No. 3 F to A. The regular train must not go beyond the point last named until the extra train has arrived, unless directed by train order to do so. These orders give right to the train first named over the other train, between the points named. If the trains meet at either of the designated points, the first named train must take the siding, unless the order otherwise prescribes.

Under order No. 2 Extra 3037 east has right over first No. 275 H to C, and over second No. 275 C to B.

The second order (number not given) instructing first No. 275 to wait at D until 3.40 A.M. for Extra 3037 east in no way "fulfills, supersedes or annuls" order No. 2. The second order is entirely improper and misleading, and neither Extra 3037 nor first No. 275 could or should accept it without first having order No. 2 annulled. With order No. 2 alone, first No. 275 could not leave C until Extra 3037 east had arrived at C, and under that order the only proper "wait" order that could or should be issued would be for Extra 3037 to wait at some station between H and C for first No. 275.

A train dispatcher issuing such train orders would certainly be severely reprimanded if not disciplined, and himself instructed on the rules.

If the train orders were worded exactly as you have given, they are very crude and not only show poor grammar, but also they are not standard in form. The word "will" as given "will run" was eliminated from train orders twenty-five years ago, and it would be very crude and improper to say that a train "will have right" over another. It is proper to say "has right," and no other wording should be used.

In the second order "First No. 275, engine 3003, wait at D until 3.40 A.M. for Extra 3037" should say "for Extra 3037 east." Also, Standard Code, as well as most railroads, has dropped the "No." and uses only "First 275." However, it is possible this form is still used on your line.

Wherever Trainmen Ate She Waited at the Table

Derails

One Brakeman's Death on Johnson's Drag Was Called an Accident, but Dave Meade Looked for Two

By E. S. Dellinger

Author of "Redemption for Slim," "Lure of the Rails," "Pin-Grease John"

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

ALL his life he had hated Rounder Johnson, the conductor. As brakeman, Dave Meade has seen too much of his bullying, ugly disposition. They buried Milly Carroon with her baby not long before; and Dave knew that Rounder was responsible. Then Jimmy Carroon fell from a moving freight; it was called an accident, but Rounder was near Jimmy when he lost his grip.

One night during a thunderstorm Dave finds a girl trying to ride the freight. Breaking open a sealed car, he leaves her there, hoping none of the crew will discover her. But Conductor Johnson is drunk and suspicious. During the height of the storm Dave works his way to the car in which he has left the girl and finds Rounder annoying her. Seeing Dave, he shoots. In a fight Dave forgets that Johnson's father and mother have been like his own parents to him, and he mauls the big conductor.

Dave Meade learns that the girl is Molly Carroon, sister of Milly and Jimmy. Not having heard of their death, she is on her way to live with them. Dave sends her to the boarding house of Mother Haskell, where she leads a quiet life for a while; but at the death of Mother Haskell she is forced

to accept work in a saloon owned by Rounder Johnson and Chicken Hart. Dave pleads with her to marry him and leave the saloon, but she refuses because she does not yet love him.

At first Chicken Hart treats Molly royally; but in time he and Rounder grow annoyed at her aloofness. When Dave is away they drug her and shut her up a prisoner in her room. She is very ill when Dave returns and takes her to a hospital, and when she emerges she goes to another town. Dave is burning with wrath against Johnson for his treatment of the Carroons, but he cannot retaliate without involving Molly. And then one day the yardmaster, Clancy, says to him:

"You better git off that Johnson car, and take a job with somebody else. They'll git you sooner or later!"

V

IN spite of friendly warning, in spite of the fact that he knew their methods, Dave Meade continued braking on the same crew with Ed and Rounder Johnson. In fact, he told other people that he was in no danger so often that he really came to believe it himself

For months there was no apparent reason to believe otherwise. Ed, the nearest friend Dave had ever known, treated him just as before. There was the same comradeship between them that had existed since they were mere boys. Even during the period when Ed stood ace high in the affections of Molly Carroon, the two young men had gone on, joshing each other and seeming as if nothing had ever come between them

Rounder, once he was thoroughly sobered up, never mentioned the quarrel again. Indeed, he appeared to have entirely forgotten it; but deep back in his cold eyes lurked a steely glitter that would have warned a more cautious man to be on his guard.

Ed and Rounder had both been laying off when the little affair at the Badge and Lantern occurred. Ed had already gone over to the west coast for a vacation, and three days later Rounder left for a fishing trip in Canada. Dave worked the rear end during the thirty days they were gone, and was sincerely sorry when they returned, as well he might have been. On the day when he sent Molly into Bloomfield to go to work, they came back on the car and sent him braking ahead again

Going up that night on No. 33, they headed in at Stouton for No. 4. Dave, looking over his train, found a brake beam which had evidently come down when the engineer released his brakes after having stopped in the siding. When he entered the caboose, Rounder was sitting at his desk, smoking a cigar, and Ed was lying on the locker, reading a magazine.

Rounder merely grunted as the front brakeman entered. Ed laid down the magazine and watched him while he took out the wrench and cold chisel.

"Need any help, Dave?" questioned Ed, as Dave started out by the front door.

"No—I'll get it all right. I'll leave the tools on the switch stand when we head out."

"O. K., buddy!"

Dave closed the door and hurried away toward the head end. He did not see Rounder Johnson when, two minutes later, the big conductor stole out of the caboose, doused his light on the forward platform, and started following him up the main line

Returning to the car with the drag-

ging beam, Dave gave a stop sign, gave it long and hard—a signal to the hogger to hold the train until he received further notice. The engineer answered with two blasts of his whistle, and Dave, without using the extra precaution of pulling the pin on the car ahead, crawled under the rear truck and went to work.

For several minutes he lay there on his back, sweating and talking to himself. He had taken down the ground rod and the right link, and was busy with the left, his feet braced against the wheels, one leg on the track.

He heard No. 4's whistle and the whining of the steel as the fast passenger train came tearing down through Stouton. The track to his right was as bright as day, but he did not see the figure that had slipped across the train a few car lengths behind him, lighted a lantern, and was giving the engineer a highball. Neither did he hear, in the roar of the passing train, two short blasts with which his engineer answered the signal.

The first inkling he had of danger came when, No. 4 having darted past, he heard, not six car lengths away, the slack going out of the couplings.

Then came a mad scramble to save his life. Dropping wrench and chisel, kicking over his lantern, he surged backward, clawing for brake pipe, for coupling lever, anything to which he might cling, so that he would move with the train and not be ground under its wheels. As the car under which he had been working started with a clatter and a clang, he luckily managed to grab an air hose. Dragging his feet along like anchors on a sand bottom, he hung on until he could get out his knife and cut the hose.

As soon as he could disentangle himself from the coupling, he hurried over to the head end and began bawling out the engineer for moving without a signal.

"I got a signal, big boy," came back the engineer.

"Got a signal? Who in hell gave it to you?"

"I dunno—somebody handed me a high sign, and I thought it was you. Looked to be right square where you was workin'."

Dave had nothing more to say. Instead, he went hurrying back toward the caboose, partly to get an air hose to replace the one he had cut, partly to learn where Rounder Johnson had been.

As he approached the telegraph office, ten car lengths behind where he had been working, Rounder came lolling out, his hands stuffed in his trouser pockets. Ed, who had started forward on hearing the air go into emergency, was behind him.

"Which one of you two fellows give that hoghead a highball?" Dave demanded angrily, as soon as he came within hearing distance.

"Gave the hoghead a highball?" echoed Rounder innocently.

"Yeah — somebody gave him a highball just as No. 4 was coming."

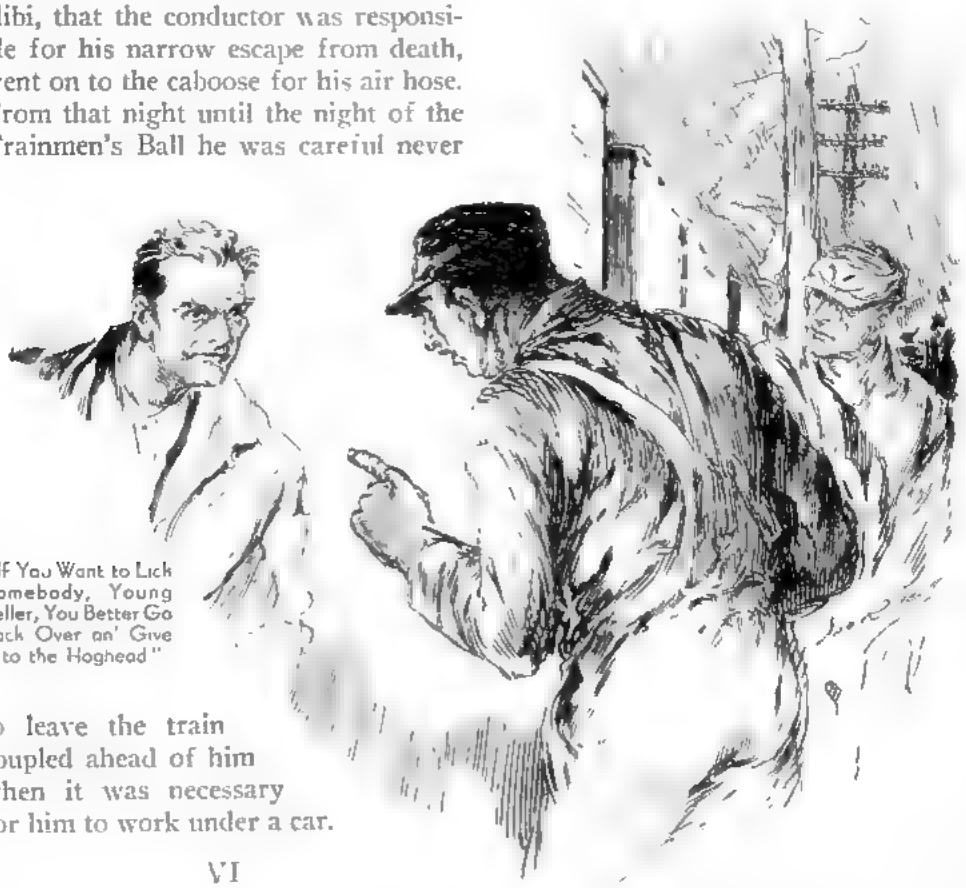
"I don't reckon either one of us gave any highballs—not since we been here in this burg. Kid here's been back in the crummy, readin', an' I been right here in the office ever since before 4 come. Ain't that right, fellers?"

Rounder turned to the operator and Ed. Both men nodded in assent, but Dave noticed that Ed did not look him in the eye. He was puzzled. Rounder continued speaking.

"If you want to lick somebody, young feller, you better go back over an' give it to the hoghead. Taller pot

prob'ly wanted the engine moved so he could dump his ash pan, an' now the old mudheel's tryin' to lay it onto the train crew."

Rounder gave a mocking, unpleasant laugh, and started back into the office. Dave, convinced, in spite of the alibi, that the conductor was responsible for his narrow escape from death, went on to the caboose for his air hose. From that night until the night of the Trainmen's Ball he was careful never to leave the train coupled ahead of him when it was necessary for him to work under a car.



"If You Want to Lick Somebody, Young Feller, You Better Go Back Over an' Give It to the Hoghead"

VI

In the social life of the terminal town of Ainesville, the Trainmen's Ball, held on the evening of the first Wednesday in November, is the one great night of the season. From this event all others are located in the calendar—the church social so many weeks before the ball, the Lounge Lizard bridge party so many weeks after. Every trainman who has the seniority, or who can dig up a sick grandmother or a dead uncle, lays off for the affair. Visitors from Kansas City, from St. Louis, from the Queen City, and a dozen lesser terminals, come pouring into the town, some with their wives, some with their sweethearts, and a scattered few, never welcomed with less legitimate companions. It was some cosmopolitan crew.

This year the ball was doubly important to the élite of Ainesville, because it was to celebrate the opening of the Green Frog, a new roadhouse built two miles below town at the junction of Frog Creek with the Gasconade. It was trebly important to Dave Meade, because Molly Carroon, who had at last promised to marry him, was coming down from Bloomfield for the

celebration, with the understanding that the wedding was to take place at half past eleven o'clock in the Methodist parsonage.

Dave was not certain that she really loved him; but since that night three months ago, when he had urged her to be his wife, and especially since her break with Ed Johnson about the time of the affair at the Badge and Lantern, she had seemed changed. Before, she had been only an innocent child; now she was a woman grown wise in the ways of life. She had sought Dave, and had made it possible for him to repeat his question.

He knew that he loved her. There could be no mistake in his own feelings. She needed him, and that was sufficient.

This evening, as his stock train stormed up the long grade in the autumn twilight, he was singing. All the afternoon he had been singing—"Casey Jones," "Nellie Gray," "Carry Me Back"—anything that came into his head. It was perhaps the first moment of unalloyed happiness that his scarred, tortured life had ever known.

He looked away at the western sky, with the red and yellow flames of sunset gleaming through the skeleton frames of tall oaks and elms and walnuts that darted by just outside the right of way. Black smoke from the locomotive's belching stack leaped toward the blue, straightened out, and flowed back to settle above the gently rocking decks or to sprinkle fine cinders about him.

But Dave didn't mind. He was happy. He looked at his watch.

"Four fifty-five!" he muttered. "Have to waltz around, if I'm going to get cleaned up to meet Molly on No. 10! Having to push ole Polly Ware and his drag over the hump sure balled up the works!"

He let his heels knock together against the side of the car he was riding. There came the sound of his engine whistle answering a signal. He sprang to his feet, lantern in hand, and scanned the track. Far ahead of his engine glowed the crimson flare of a fusee. The engineer whistled out a flag from the rear.

"Darn that drag!" growled Dave. "I wish old Polly would keep out of our way!"

The stock train clanked to a stop. Wheels groaned, brake shoes clattered, drawbars rattled. On the engine the pop valve opened, and a geyser of white steam climbed skyward.

Dave walked two car lengths toward it, stopped, and looked at his watch again. More lost minutes! No. 10 was due in Ainesville at nine minutes to six. Even if they got going at once, by the time he put his engine away he would have no time to clean up. He would have to meet Molly all dirty and grimy. Well, he had done that many a time.

He laughed, turned, and looked back at the green marker on the caboose twenty cars away. Why not run back and clean up while he was waiting? He could wash off the worst of the grime—enough to make himself presentable, at least. Then he could walk the tops back to the engine as they ran into Ainesville. Good idea!

He gave one look toward the engine, then turned toward the green markers on the caboose, and, lantern in hand, hit the gangplanks running. As he swung down inside the cupola, he heard the voices of Ed and Rounder Johnson raised in argument.

"You better get your lantern an' get back there flaggin', kid," the con-

ductor was storming. "Some blankety blank 'll come tearin' around that curve an' slough into us."

"Don't be frettin', big boy. There ain't nobody between us and No. 10; and 10 ain't due—"

"You never know who's behind you, you young jassack," interrupted Rounder. "What the hell's your hurry to-night, anyhow?"

Rounder snapped his train book shut, and, chewing viciously at a long black cigar, stared angrily at Ed, who stood at the wash basin, with his suspenders hanging and the sleeves of his undershirt rolled up, carefully removing the soot and grease from his neck and arms.

"All right about my hurry, bud," returned Ed. "I got me a new dame from St. Louie coming up. She—"

"Yeah! You've always got a new dame dated up, kid."

"Kind o' runs in the family, big one. Besides, she's a real peacherina—almost as cute as the little piece of private property old Dave's been paying hospital bills for this fall."

Ed gave a hard, reckless laugh—the laugh of a man who has had a drink more than he needs. Dave's homely face flushed to the roots of his curly brown hair; but, without replying to his partner's taunt, as soon as Ed tossed the wet towel into the open grip and sat down on the locker, he took his place at the wash basin.

Rounder opened the cupboard where he kept his report blanks, and, taking out a pint bottle, drank greedily.

"That girl o' Dave's is gittin' to be the joke of the division," he flared, as he set the bottle back in the cupboard.

"What's that?"

Dave stopped with his soapy hands poised beneath his chin.

"I said you'd better take an old head's advice, an' quit wastin' your money on women, Davie," mocked Rounder.

Dave strode toward him with blazing eyes.

"I'd like to know what business it is of yours what I do with my money, you big slob!" he stormed.

Rounder shrugged his heavy shoulders and removed the cigar from his mouth.

"Oh, nothin'—nothin'. No need gittin' hostile about it, Davie. I just wanted to tell you that payin' a woman's bills an' furnishin' her with spendin' money is apt to git a little boy into trouble—that's all."

"Wouldn't get anybody into trouble if people would attend to their own business," snapped Dave, returning to the wash basin.

"I dunno, Davie — I dunno. You see, old Stacey's been askin' me all about the deal. He—"

"He's sure going to the fount of authority, Rounder!"

"Maybe so; but it don't look straight to an outsider."

"I don't give a damn how it looks to an outsider. If Stacey wants to know the straight of it, I'll tell him."

Dave hesitated whether to tell Rounder and Ed about the coming wedding, and thus end their bitter chaffing. The engineer called in his flag. Ed stepped to the rear platform and signaled "away." The big conductor sat with a sneer on his once handsome face.

"You know as well as I do why I paid that kid's hospital bill, Rounder," Dave went on. "I know all about how you had her doped, and sent Chicken Hart to her with his dirty propositions. I know she wouldn't pay the price—"

"So you took her in, figgerin', I

suppose, that she'd pay you the price—later!"

"I wasn't figuring anything of the sort," defended the brakeman hotly. "Anybody that says I was is a dirty—"

"He was just doin' an act of Christian charity, bud," Ed Johnson put in with a laugh, trying to smooth over the quarrel he had started.

Rounder, who had hurled himself out of his chair, stopped six feet from where Dave stood washing.

"Yeah, he's a little angel, Davie is!" he sneered. "He's a little angel sproutin' wings!"

"Can that angel stuff, you big bum!" snapped Dave, as he took a last swipe at his face with the towel. "I'm no angel sprouting wings, but it's a cinch I'm no devil sprouting horns, like some birds I know!"

Dave, having slipped on a clean shirt and tie, donned his jumper once more, and went hurrying over the top to open the switch for his train when it pulled into Ainesville yards. Rounder stared after his enemy, with a cold glitter in his hard eyes, and turned toward his brother with the remark:

"He's goin' to git his, the young devil! It's comin', an' it's comin' fast!"

Ed shrugged his shoulders. Rounder passed his right hand across the scar that he had carried over his left eye since the night, five months ago, when Dave gave him that awful beating for molesting Molly. Then, taking another drink of whisky, he dropped the flask into his grip and snapped it shut.

VII

THAT night, when Dave and Molly alighted from the motor bus in front of the Green Frog, the place was all aglow with emerald and ruby and white lights, glowing like the fixed and moving signals of a busy terminal. Above the arched entrance to the grounds, guarded by a huge frog gleaming with a hundred emerald bulbs, hung the emblem of the trainmen's order, outlined in green and red.

The sixty-foot passageway from the entrance to the doorway of the dance hall was walled and covered with red paper, built to represent a freight caboose. At the rear of the caboose was a pair of markers, showing green to front and side and red to rear. To the left was a door which led out to a graveled walk, angling off across the grounds and ending in the forest of oaks and elms and walnuts that grew densely along the river bottom. Right up to the edge of the forest two parallel strings of lights, some red, some yellow, some green, clung like switch-lights on a lead.

Through this entrance, past the door leading to the forest, beneath the green and red lights, Dave and Molly passed like souls through the gate of judgment. At the doorway of the dance hall they paused, and stood watching for a moment. The room was full. Two hundred couples danced in a mad whirl beneath the streamers and festoons of many brilliant colors. Dim lights shed their glow over the faces of the dancers or threw grotesque shadows about those who sat in chairs along the walls. In the pit in the corner the new jazz orchestra from St. Louis, the ebony faces of the musicians working with excitement, hurled out barbaric strains from saxophone and trombone, while their drums rolled on like the tom-toms of a pagan ancestry in some far-away jungle.

In the moment when Dave and Molly stood outlined there against the brighter light, the music ceased. The dancers clapped and were silent. Over the laughing, reveling mass a Sabbath

hush seemed to fall; and in that hush every eye, as if drawn by a magnet, turned toward the couple in the doorway.

For seconds they stood still. Some couples nodded and smiled; others turned away with a whispered sneer; still others gave but a passing glance of curiosity and turned back to their partners. From far across the hall, where Rounder Johnson stood, his arms still encircling the waist of Ed's "new dame from St. Louie," there came a hard, sneering, maudlin laugh.

Molly crimsoned. Dave glanced angrily across the floor at his enemy, and his face went black as a thunder cloud; but next moment the orchestra broke into a blare of jazz, they joined the dance, and the incident was momentarily forgotten.

For the next few hours the couple so soon to be married settled down to an evening of enjoyment. Molly's simple beauty drew about her a crowd of admirers—young men with whom she had flirted during her first weeks in Ainesville, and others to whom she was introduced for the first time. Each one was eager for a dance, and she was on the floor for almost every number. Dave, his anger forgotten, was dancing, too.

At half past ten, while Molly was dancing with Ed Johnson, Dave passed near her on the floor. Over her partner's shoulder she flashed him a look which brought him to her side as soon as the dance was ended.

"Shall we go soon, dear?" he whispered.

"Yes, yes! I'm tired, and I want to be alone with you."

She let her eyes rest softly upon his plain face. He smiled.

"Let's dance this one together," he urged.

She nodded, returning his smile; and as the orchestra struck up a slow waltz they floated together out among the dancers.

As they were passing the door, Rounder Johnson came staggering through the caboose and reeled across the floor toward them. They did not notice him—not until he had placed himself alongside them, and, grasping Molly by the left arm, was trying to pull her loose from Dave.

"Dance this one with your papa, sweetie!" he boomed drunkenly. "Davie here thinks because he pays your hospital bills for you, he's got—"

The bully never finished his sentence. When Dave whirled and saw the look of aversion and shame that spread over the girl's face, he took one step backward, swung himself free from Molly, and, with the palm of his hand, smashed Rounder in the grinning mouth.

Instantly there was turmoil. Women screamed. Men hurried forward. Ed and two friends elbowed their way through the crowd, and, seizing Rounder before he could stagger to his feet, led him cursing from the floor.

"Let's go now, dear!" pleaded Molly, as the group disappeared through the door leading out toward the forest. "Let's go before more trouble comes!"

"I've never run from trouble in my life, Molly—not when somebody else started it," said Dave slowly. "Let's finish this dance."

Once more he placed his arm about her waist and clasped her hand in his, and they went on with the dance. The orchestra, to drown the sound of the turmoil, to reassure the milling crowd, struck into the lively strain of the earlier evening. By the time the dance was finished, a stranger entering the hall would never have suspected that

less than four minutes ago a man had been knocked down and then dragged from the floor cursing and spitting blood; but every man in the Green Frog who knew the River Division knew that Dave Meade had struck the opening blow in a conflict which must sooner or later lead to a killing.

As long as the oldest of them could remember, even back to construction days, old Gabe Johnson and his fighting, bullying sons had cowed with club and fist all comers who dared to oppose them. Some had been beaten until they left of their own accord. Old Gabe, in his official capacity, had discharged others on flimsy pretexts. A few, like Jimmy Carroon, riding trains manned by the Johnson boys, had been picked up in cracker boxes at the end of their last night run—dead, it was suspected, not because they had fallen from the top, as Rounder had reported, but because they could neither be beaten nor bullied off the job where only henchmen of old Gabe Johnson were wanted.

Ed, however, had seemed of a different stripe from the six older brothers. True, he had led a pretty reckless life from the time when he was put into long trousers; but, largely through his close friendship with Dave Meade, he had not been mixed up in constant brawls, nor had he ever been suspected of participation in a killing. Still, the group in the Green Frog was not surprised when, as the dance closed, and Dave led Molly off the floor, Ed, his jaws squared like his father's, his eyes glittering black, barred the exit

Molly paled at sight of him. Dave stepped forward.

"Fellow wants to see you outside, Meade," Ed growled.

"Yeah?" said Dave, patting the hand which Molly had laid upon his arm.

"Don't go, Dave!" she urged. "They're drunk—all of them. They'll kill you! Remember—"

"I remember," Dave told her slowly; "but you don't need to worry. This thing has to be settled some time, and it might as well be now as later. The day's past when that piece of carrion can bully every man and insult every woman that comes to town, and get by with it. I—"

"Come on!" snapped Ed. "This ain't no time for love-making."

"All right, buddy," Dave returned calmly.

Stooping, he brushed Molly's hair with his lips. She clung to him, drew down his face, and kissed his cheeks. Ed stared in silence. Surprise, mingled with half drunken rage, overspread his tanned face; but soon the hard, unforgiving look of the Johnson breed came back into his eyes.

He turned toward the door, Dave following. When they were halfway through the caboose, the yardmaster, who had seen the beginning of the trouble and knew its cause, and who also knew things of the past that few others suspected, stared at them until they turned through the door leading toward the forest. Then old Clancy hurried after Dave, and, catching him by the sleeve, pulled him back.

"Don't go out there, Meade," he pleaded. "They're a lot of bad hombres, that gang. If you go out there, you're liable to come back feet foremost."

"You stay here and attend to your own damned business!" snarled Ed. "You ain't in on this, and you better keep out!"

The old man came back into the room, his wrinkled face troubled and uneasy. Women stood talking in whispers. Men looked sheepishly at one

another; yet not a man there made a move to follow Dave until long after he had gone down the lane between the lights of yellow and green and red and disappeared into the forest. They all knew better than to meddle in Johnson troubles. Moreover, they all considered that a man's woman troubles were his own, to be settled in his own way.

Molly started from the door, but they dragged her back and held her until the crisis came.

Beyond the glow of colored lights, Dave came upon Rounder Johnson and four companions—men who had stood behind him in every scrape in which he needed help. To-night, crazed with drink like himself, they were ready to stab or shoot at the first opportunity. They were in a long, narrow glade between two giant water oaks, through whose skeleton branches a setting moon shot down shafts of pale light. Rounder, in his shirt sleeves, was cursing and raving. His huge fists hung like drawheads from his stiff white cuffs.

"So you come, did you, you damned little fool?" he raged, as Dave and Ed stepped into the glade.

"You sent for me, my lord," laughed Dave.

Rounder approached to within three feet of him. Dave was poised ready to spring. He wondered why his enemy had not already struck. The big fellow, apparently sober now, was speaking again.

"I wanted to see you, my angelic youth," he said, in a tone of unusual politeness.

"So I supposed. What do you want?"

"Listen, Dave—I've got a proposition to make to you."

"Yeah? I'm waiting."

Dave, still watching the other man's every movement, stood with his arms folded across his breast, his legs braced. The orchestra had once more struck up its barbaric strain. On the sullen river the moonlight flickered and shimmered.

"Did you kiss your little floozy good-by, Davie?"

"What business is it of yours whether I did or didn't?" snapped Dave.

With a laugh, Ed turned and sauntered away toward the dance hall, whence several men had emerged and were coming down the lighted walk.

"Because you ain't goin' to see her no more—that's why," replied Rounder.

"Yeah? That your proposition?"

Dave was still cool. Rounder was standing, his fists clenching and unclenching. His buddies were closing around him in a circle. Finally he blurted out:

"You been buckin' me for a long time, Meade — buckin' me ever since you got grown. That deal last spring ain't settled for yet; an' then your takin' this dame away to Bloomfield just when—"

Dave broke into a laugh.

"Laugh, you frowzy idiot!" snarled Rounder. "Wait till I git through, an' then laugh! You're leavin' this place to-night, Dave—leavin' for good an' all; an' you ain't takin' that dame with you, savvy?"

"Suppose I don't want to go?"

"Then you're goin' to git hell beat out o' you right here an' now. I'll give you two minutes to make up your mind."

"I don't need two minutes, you dirty skunk! I don't need one," Dave said hotly. "No bully's ever made me run yet, and—"

With a bellow like a bull, Rounder charged upon him. Dave took one step to the left, and, as the big man passed him, struck a short jab to the jaw and another to the side of the head which sent him staggering. Dave whipped off his coat, and stood ready as Rounder advanced once more, step by step.

Time was, before dissipation had sapped his manhood, that Rounder Johnson was a formidable fighter; and even yet, though he was fat and full of whisky, he was no despicable antagonist. Dave, despite the fact that he had been the victor five months ago, knew full well that with only Rounder's friends to see the fight, he was in for a desperate battle.

VIII

When Rounder closed upon Dave, the two men stood toe to toe, swapping blows, any one of which would have sent a punier man sprawling. Rounder kept crowding, surging, tripping, slugging. Finally he beat down Dave's guard and dealt him a smashing blow in the mouth. Dave reeled dizzily, and drunken laughter burst from the four in the glade.

Rounder came on again, less cautiously than before. Dave, recovering himself, caught the big fellow off his guard and sent him flat on his back. He started to follow up the advantage gained, but three of the four leaped forward, pinioned his arms, and held him.

By this time Dave realized that this was not to be a fight, but a beating or a butchery. He had no chance, for, as his antagonist came up once more, the moonlight flashed from shining metal. For seconds Rounder stood ten feet away, a double-action Colt in his hand. Then, with a curse, he dropped it back into his hip pocket and hurled himself furiously upon Dave. The two men holding the brakeman turned him loose too late to get position or find footing among the slippery leaves; and before he could recover his balance, Rounder was upon him, slugging, cursing, raining blows that sent him to the sod.

As he fell, the conductor fell upon him and pinioned him down. Dave, reaching up, grasped his enemy by the windpipe and held on with the grip of despair. Again and again Rounder tried to free himself, but Dave clung to him. Finally, ceasing his blows into the brakeman's unprotected face, he moved his right hand back toward his hip.

Dave sensed the murderous movement. As Rounder's hand closed over the pistol grip, his own closed with it. The two men rolled over and over, locked in a death grapple, while the drunken bystanders looked on.

Inch by inch the conductor's hand crept around from behind. Dave could not hold it. Johnson pressed it forward, striving to get the Colt into position for a shot into Dave's head, his stomach, anywhere that Rounder could fire a leaden slug to end the grudge he had harbored for more than five months.

Dave, knowing that one shot from the revolver would send him down the road over which so many others had gone, fought for life, striving to get possession of the weapon. Against Rounder's superior weight he could balance a life cleanly lived and a mental quickness undimmed by liquor lately drunk.

For an instant he relaxed his struggle. In that instant Rounder thrust a hand forward, twisting down. As the gun came between their faces, pointed toward Dave, the brakeman, throwing

all his remaining strength into one final surge, pushed the muzzle from him. There came a flash of yellow flame that seared his face, and then another flash.

The first shot crashed into the sluggish waters of the muddy river; but the second found a mark. Rounder Johnson uttered one startled cry, which died half born. Dave felt the grip on the gun hand relax from his own. Rounder coughed twice, and tumbled over, a bullet in his brain.

For a full minute Dave sat with the revolver in his hand, staring at it as it glistened in the moonlight. It was Rounder Johnson's gun—a punchboard gun—a gun exactly like his own, which lay snugly in the bottom of his grip in his room at the Badge and Lantern; and Rounder was dead.

In that moment he did not think of flight. In fact, he was not thinking of anything. He was like a man in a nightmare. He looked at the gun and at the four men who came crowding around. Slowly he rose, the gun still in his hand, and put on his coat.

A great crowd of men came rushing out from the dance hall, a sprinkling of women with them. Ed Johnson was in the lead. The yardmaster was close behind him. A cry went up:

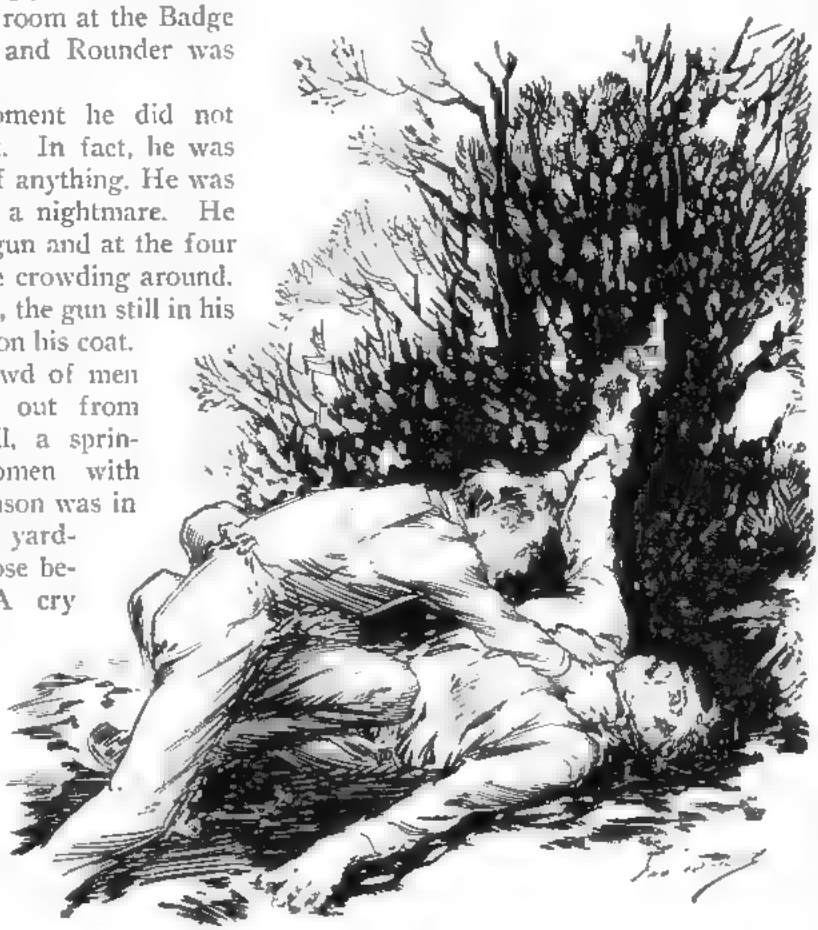
"Dave Meade's killed Rounder Johnson—shot him dead!"

Dave backed up against the tree and stood toying with the gun, watching Ed as he dropped upon the ground and lifted his brother's head into his lap. The yardmaster slipped up beside Dave and spoke in a low tone.

"Beat it, kid! Run before they come alive! They'll string you up, shore as they git you!"

"But he—he started it, Mr. Clancy," Dave stammered. "Why—why, he shot himself with his own gun. He—"

"Don't make no difference, Davie." The old man was already pulling Dave along with him, unnoticed, into the



Johnson Pressed It Forward, Striving to Get the Colt into Position for a Shot into Dave's Head

screen of bushes on the side of the grounds away from the river, talking hurriedly as he went. "I know 'em, Davie. They'll frame you and hang you. I seen 'em do it before. That's the way they done your pa. They was afraid of him—him and Jack Corrigan, the only two men in Ainesville they couldn't bluff. Rounder got 'em into a fight. A lot of folks think yet that Rounder brained Corrigan; but they proved your pa done it, Dave—proved it, and hanged him, same as they'll hang you if they ketch you!"

The old man stood clinging to Dave, urging him into the darkness of the forest. For a moment the younger man stood with bowed head, mingled emotions seething within him. In the few seconds permitted him for thought he recalled with surging bitterness that last night in the cell with his father, the night before the hanging. He remembered how Mother Johnson had taken him to her home in the morning, had fed him, had tried to keep him there until after ten o'clock, how he had returned to the jail yard at the instant when the trap was sprung, and had seen, through hot tears, his father go down to his shameful death.

He shuddered at thought of it. Now, if he remained, innocent of murder though he was, he too would go to the gallows as his father had gone fifteen years ago.

With the passing seconds the crowd had come alive. From the glade less than a hundred yards away, through brush and trees, came the sound of Ed Johnson's voice, cold, hard, metallic:

"Get Dave Meade! He's murdered Rounder!"

"See!" the old man exclaimed. "There they are, like coyotes after a suckin' calf. Go, kid! You can get away if you try."

For one instant Dave hesitated Then, turning to the old man, he spoke rapidly.

"I'm going, Mr. Clancy," he said "You're right—it's no use to fight 'em. I'm going, but you must—you must hunt up Molly." He choked. The grizzled veteran of the yard pressed his hand. "Go to Molly Carroon—now," he went on. "Tell her I'm gone—tell her why. Get her back to Bloomfield, Mr. Clancy, and tell her to forget me."

Dave whirled and groped his way blindly into the dense woods, fleeing from the hue and cry; leaving behind him the life that was more than life to him—the woman whom he loved with his whole soul.

Once he had decided to attempt escape from the injustice that he knew he would have to face in Ainesville, he plunged on into the wilderness that began at the back door of the Green Frog and stretched away, mile on mile, over the hills to the southward. Out of the southwest came the Gasconade River, which, rising in the hills near Bloomfield, flowed on to join the Missouri away in the northeast. From the southeast came Frog Creek; and from each of these two larger streams, like the ribs of a maple leaf, the valleys of countless brooks led up into the surrounding hills. Their bottoms were a tangled mass of grapevine and Virginia creeper, of hazel and willow, of ash, elm, and hornbeam, beneath whose bare branches, at this season, yellowing ferns and weeds stood as high as a man's shoulder.

Going was difficult. Still, at the end of an hour, Dave was beyond the sound of the pursuit, which, beginning at the scene of the fight, had beaten cautiously through the bushes as he left the lights of the Green Frog behind

him. Even now he was buried so deeply in the tangled wilderness that only bloodhounds could find him.

Bloodhounds! That was the thing he feared. As he hurried on, stumbling through the briers and brambles, his mind raced back to the time when he and Ed Johnson, mere boys then, had been summoned on a sheriff's posse to follow bloodhounds brought from St. Louis on the trail of a negro who had insulted a neighbor's daughter. Bloodhounds! In the dim shadows of the setting moon he could even now see the huge beasts as, warming to the trail, they tore at the leash, white froth dripping from their huge jaws, their evil eyes burning red like fire.

He paused, listened, and paled. Was that the bay of bloodhounds behind him on the trail? No, it was but the lapping of the water on the river bank.

Still he shivered—shivered from the cold without, shivered more from the chill of fear within. Love may lash man on throughout the years, or spur him to an act of courage in the face of mighty odds; hate may draw him with a fierce lust for vengeance, may drive him on against his better reason; but only fear can yield the urge that makes him forget both love and hate, and guides him on like the grim hand of destiny. So Dave Meade, fleeing through the night, hurried breathless, unheeding the brambles that scratched his flesh and the thorns that tore his garments.

For more than an hour he continued his course down the river. The moon had set. Pale stars peeped out from behind streaks of gray cloud; and in their light Dave reached a dim road that came from across the river and wound up the hillside. He stopped for a long time, thinking, and looking out across the dark water.

He almost doubted the wisdom of his flight. He had not killed Rounder Johnson. The man in his drunken rage had killed himself with his own gun. Would it not be wisest to return to Ainesville, surrender himself to the sheriff, and stand trial?

On the other hand, only friends of the Johnsons had been witnesses of the killing. Old Gabe owned the sheriff body and soul. The Johnsons had never let go a man who had harmed one of their breed. They had stuck together—they always would. Dave recalled the old yardmaster's warning. The vision of his father rose before him.

The sound of No. 7 whistling for a crossing floated to him on the still night air. He wondered if Molly would be on that train, returning to Bloomfield. Molly—he had lost her! What a price to pay for life!

He waded into the cold water of the Gasconade, which at this point was perhaps a hundred yards wide and not more than waist deep. As he approached the farther shore, he circled upstream, following along just under the bank, for bloodhounds cannot follow a drowned trail. At a distance of a quarter mile from the ford, however, he was compelled by the deep water to take once more to the land.

At three o'clock, definitely headed for a hiding place that he knew, he passed within half a mile of the Green Frog, on the opposite side of the river. He stopped to look and listen. Only a lone light gleamed where at midnight brilliance had reigned. It shone like the flame of a hopeless love.

Thinking of Molly Carroon, he was tempted once more to return to Ainesville, to surrender himself and let the law take its course. Again, ruled by his calmer judgment, he resolutely

turned his back upon the lone light, and sneaked away, a fugitive from injustice.

IX

On the day following the Trainmen's Ball, Rounder Johnson was buried by his fraternal order in the brush-grown cemetery on the hill overlooking Ainesville. Nine-tenths of those who followed the casket up the winding road secretly rejoiced that he was dead. Scarcely a family in Ainesville but had felt the blasting touch of his life of evil; but because he had been old Gabe Johnson's favorite son, they had tolerated him

Now he was gone, and many scarred hearts were singing; but when old Gabe and his six living sons filed up to the casket and stood looking down in stern-lipped, dry-eyed silence, the yardmaster mumbled:

"The Lord have mercy on poor Dave, if they ketch him!"

He Paused, Listened and Paled. Was That the Bay of Blood Hounds Behind Him on the Trail?

But the prospects were that they would not catch him. Before the funeral, the bloodhounds had been brought out from St. Louis, and, baffled by the drowned trail, had been

taken back to the city. For five days after the funeral, posses headed by the county officials and made up of Johnson henchmen combed hill and valley without finding any trace of Dave Meade. Posters bearing his description, picturing him as a desperate criminal, and offering five thousand dollars reward for his return to Ainesville, were spread at old Gabe's command in every railway terminal in America.

Finally, at the end of three weeks, Gabe called his sons together in the office. In a ceremony intended to impress upon him the seriousness of his mission, Ed Johnson was chosen to quit his job, leave his home, and go out to seek his brother's killer.

"Go West," the old man ordered. "Go to Canada, go to Mexico. Wherever rails is laid an' trains run on 'em, look fer that turncoat an' traitor. He's been raised around a railroad. He don't know nothin' else, can't do nothin' else. He'll come back some time. It may take you a year, it may take you five years, it may take you a lifetime; but may Gawd A'mighty strike you dead if you give up this hunt till you've made Dave Meade pay the penalty. An eye fer an eye, a tooth fer a tooth, a life fer a life, says I!"

Not because he had planned his own course, but because his aggressive father had planned it for him, Ed accepted the commission and became a boomer trainman. To find Dave Meade, to bring him back to Ainesville, was the one motive of his life. Clew after clew he traced down, only to find that his man was not there.

If he knew that Rounder had been killed with his own gun while attempting murder, if for an instant he dared think that his boyhood friend had been justified in what he did, that thought was quickly smothered. What was friendship when cast in the balance against a brother's blood and a father's stern decree? With every failure Ed became more bitter, more determined to find Meade.

For five years he rambled. On the south, the Mexican Central knew his signal; on the north, he packed hot boxes for the Canadian National; in between there was scarcely a terminal, from the Mississippi to the coast, but that at some time had had his name upon its time sheets, had felt his heel upon its cindered walks. Still a boomer he was when the World War came, when the draft caught him in the fall of 1917 and took him off his job on the P. & C. at Lunas.

Faithfully the old yardmaster gave Molly Dave's last message.

"He said you should forget him," the old man told her sadly, while her face went white with agony and her hands clutched at her full throat.

Forget! How little Dave Meade knew a woman's heart—especially the heart of Molly Carroon!

The girl returned to Bloomfield and once more took her stand behind the counter in the Harvey House. Watching, hoping, fearing, listening to every rumor, she waited. When the trainmen who ate nightly at her counter told how the dogs had lost the trail, she was glad. When the posses gave up the chase, she knew it and rejoiced. When the lying poster was tacked upon the bulletin board, she read it, and a wave of bitterness swept over her.

Dave Meade a murderer? Never! He had only struck in defense of her—of her honor. In a fit of anger she tore down the poster and ground it under her heel.

TO BE CONCLUDED

The Fellow Was Evidently the Village Marshal and He Was Compelling Blackie to Trample Out the Fire

Railroaded

Loyalty and Friendship Crush the Powers of the "Vag Law" When Prison Walls Separate Two Buddies

By Seven Anderton

MOBILE SLIM had entered the little Kansas town, intent upon finding its jail. Now Mobile Slim was a hobo, and a hoosegow is usually the last place a hobo wants to see. Nevertheless, Slim, despite the fact that he was of sound mind and cold sober, had been hunting a calaboose and now stood gazing upon the object of his search.

The jail was brand new, the only new building in the town, and its unpainted new lumber glared yellow in the afternoon sun. It was a small structure, about ten by fourteen feet, and built solid of four-inch timber. It stood on a concrete foundation and had but one window, which was covered with heavy gas pipe bars. Huge iron bolts, secured with giant padlocks.

Mobile Slim had been hunting this village bastile because he was reasonably certain that his buddy and fellow wanderer, Fargo Blackie, was languishing therein.

"Nice little cage," muttered Slim, standing in the shade at the end of the weather beaten railway station as he viewed the jail. "Wonder if I can sneak up to that window and see if Blackie's in there?"

Fargo Blackie had been pinched just after noon, while busy with the manufacture of a Mulligan stew beside the railroad, half a mile outside the town. Mobile Slim had escaped being arrested with his pal, because he had gone into a little timbered gully in search of firewood. He had been returning with his arm load of fuel when he saw Blackie in the clutches of the law.

A tall, gaunt individual in rough clothes and with a big star glittering on the lapel of his coat, stood covering Blackie with a gun. The fellow was evidently the village marshal and he was compelling Blackie to trample out the fire over which the stew had been simmering.

Mobile Slim put down his wood and dived into the cover of a clump of willows, from where he watched while Blackie was marched away toward the village at the point of his captor's gun. When Blackie and the marshal were out of sight, Slim swore a few pungent cuss words and struck out across the fields toward the town. It was up to him to get Blackie out of trouble, and without loss of time. Slim and Blackie were on their way to Nebraska, where the wheat harvest was opening up and wages were reported good. They could reach their destination in one night's ride on a freight, but Blackie would have to be extricated from the toils of the law before they could proceed on their journey.

"There's one good thing about it," muttered Slim, still frowning at the jail. "Blackie won't get very lousy in that jug—it's too new."

The jail stood in a little sun dried park, just a short stone's throw across the tracks from the depot against which Slim leaned, while looking cautiously about to see if he might be able to approach the jail unobserved.

Slim glanced cautiously about to see whether it would be safe to approach the jail. He wanted, if possible, to have a few words with his buddy. The little town lay silent and apparently more than half asleep in the sizzling summer afternoon. In the main street, which crossed the tracks just above the depot, several hens and a rooster were wallowing in the inch deep yellow dust. A flock of pigeons were sunning on the roof of another building that stood just a few rods from the jail in the little park. The other building was the combination city hall and pumping station, housing the big gasoline engine that kept the town's supply of water pumped into the steel tank on a near-by tower. The rest of the village lay sprawled in the dust about the park. Not a human being except Slim seemed to be astir.

Slim reached a position below the jail's barred window. By standing on tip-toe and pressing his face against the bars, he got a look at the interior of the place. Six hoboes, typical harvest tramps, were sitting on the dirt floor, but Fargo Blackie was not among those present.

"Howdy, 'boes," called Slim. "Seen anything of a big black-haired guy by the name of Fargo Blackie?"

The imprisoned drifters scrambled to their feet and clustered about the window, all clamoring at once for a smoke. Slim gathered from their combined statements that they had been in the jail since early that morning and that all their belongings, including even tobacco and matches, had been taken away from them when they were arrested. Slim thrust a package of cigarettes and some matches through the bars and the hoboes pounced upon them eagerly. They listened to a description of Blackie and informed Slim

that his buddy had not yet been brought to the jail.

"Say, big boy," growled one of the prisoners. "If I was on the side of them bars that you're on, I'd start goin' away from here fast. If this town cap gets his eye on you, you'll be in here with us. This town has got a boodle court and what they do to a 'bo is too bad. You'd better quit worryin' about your side kicker and get going."

After a few more words with the inmates of the jail, Slim moved away, wondering what had become of Blackie. Then Blackie's voice, raised in indignation, came to Slim's ears. The sound came from an open window in the city hall about twenty steps distant. Moving quietly but swiftly, Slim darted to a place beneath the window. He dared not try to peek in, for fear of being seen, but he gathered shortly that Blackie was being given something that was intended for a trial.

"But I ain't no vag," cried Blackie's voice. "I'm a harvest hand and I've got money. The marshal took more'n twenty dollars off me."

"That'll just pay your fine of fifteen dollars and costs for disturbing the peace and resisting an officer," declared a nasal voice which Slim decided belonged to the judge or magistrate.

"When did I disturb the peace or resist an officer?" stormed Blackie. "The bull popped up with his gat while I was cookin' some chow out in the jungles. I wasn't even in town, but I didn't make no fuss about comin' along with him. I'm—"

"You're sentenced to sixty days for vagrancy," cut in the nasal voice. "And if you don't dry up I'll give you some more for contempt of court."

Blackie subsided and Slim heard the magistrate instructing the marshal to take the prisoner over to jail. Slim darted away from his listening post and into the deserted waiting room of the depot. From that vantage point he saw Blackie taken to the jail by the lanky marshal. When the marshal had locked the heavy door behind Blackie and returned to the city hall, Slim left the depot and made his way toward the sun baked main street along which squatted a dozen stores, a garage and blacksmith shop and the post office. He had decided to see a lawyer, if there was one in the town. As he turned up the street his eye fell on a sign which read:

E. L. COTTLE
Attorney
REAL ESTATE AND INSURANCE
Notary Public

"Energetic cuss," muttered Slim. "I hope he's in his office."

Slim entered the office and was greeted, after a fashion, by an elderly, sour visaged, thin lipped man with a set of sparse sandy chin whiskers. The dour one admitted that he was Cottle and made no effort to rise from the rickety swivel chair in which he reclined. His feet, in shabby congress gaiters, rested on his unopened roll top desk.

Slim explained about Blackie and expressed his desire to extricate his chum from his predicament.

"Can't you get out a habeas corpus or something?" concluded Slim. "They didn't give him any kind of a trial. Just a run through a kangaroo court."

Something like a grin smeared itself over the old lawyer's face for a moment.

"Ain't you a hopeful young feller?" he cackled. "Let me tell you something. The more hoboes they put in jail, and the longer they keep 'em there, the better, so far as I'm concerned. You'll be in there yourself

soon's the marshal catches you hanging around town."

"But I'm no vag," protested Slim, "and neither is my buddy. We're just out working in the wheat harvests. We've got money and we aim to make some more. That's why I want you to get Blackie a fair deal. I'll pay you."

"I don't want no truck with you fellers that go sky-hooting around the country," answered the patriarch. "You're jest a passel o' tramps, and jail is a right good place for you."

"Well, I'll be damned!" snorted Slim. "Say, is there a lawyer around this town that's part white man, and wants a little business?"

"There's a young squirt across the street that calls himself a lawyer," nodded Cottle. "And he sure wants business; ain't had none since he's been in town. He's darned near out of visible means of support, himself. He'll be candidate for jail with the rest of you before much longer. He'd be tickled to death to do something for you if he could, but he can't. Try him and see."

"What's his name and where's his office?" snapped Slim.

"Name's Fred Harter," answered Cottle. "Office is next door to the blacksmith shop."

Five minutes later Slim entered the office of Fred Harter. It was a little sunburned shack next to the blacksmith shop and almost directly across the main street from the jail. Harter arose and laid aside a book as Slim entered. He was a youngster, not more than twenty-five years old. He was blond and had a pair of level blue eyes and a fighting chin. He was neatly dressed, but his air was not exactly that of a prosperous man.

"Good afternoon," said the young attorney. "What can I do for you?"

"If the old codger named Cottle who I just talked to is right, you can't do anything," grinned Slim. "But I thought I'd come over and see what you thought about it."

"Sit down and tell me about it," invited Harter with an answering grin. "Thus far I have managed to refrain from admitting that the gentleman of whom you speak was right about anything. The milk of human kindness has soured on Mr. Cottle's stomach."

Slim took a chair and proceeded to relate his troubles and describe his interview with Cottle.

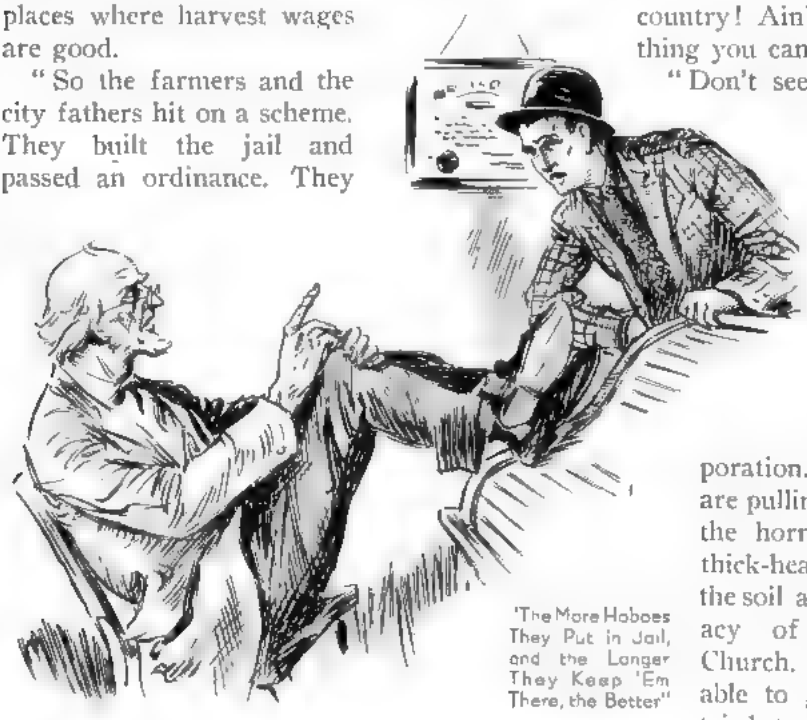
"I've only got about forty dollars," he concluded, "but I'll give it all to you if you'll get Blackie out of this mess so we can light out for Nebraska."

"My friend," said the young attorney, a grim smile playing about his lips, "I'd give five hundred, myself, to get your buddy, or any other hobo, out of that coop over yonder. I don't want your money and I'm afraid your partner will be over there for the next sixty days, unless he consents to be paroled to some farmer. In that case, we might fix up some way for him to escape from the farmer, but wait until I tell you what you're up against.

"I've only been out of college six months. I might have gone to work for some big law firm in the city, but I had a burning desire to hang up my own shingle and work my way up from the rural districts. I picked this town for a starting place, but I must admit that I haven't got started yet. Shortly after I hit the town the township dads and a few of the farmers had a meeting to discuss the problem of harvest help. The result was that they built that jail over there in the park. You see this county is farther off the main-lines of the railroads than most, and

even more than commonly rural. The farmers in this neck of the woods figure that a farm hand is worth about ten dollars a month and his grub, if he's a light eater. Naturally, the hoboes flag right on through this part of the country, heading for the places where harvest wages are good.

"So the farmers and the city fathers hit on a scheme. They built the jail and passed an ordinance. They pinch every hobo who drifts through and slap him into jail. The marshal searches him and finds out how much money he has on him. Then they trump a charge of some kind, and the judge fines the poor hobo within five dollars or so of what his roll amounted to. It takes the other five to pay court costs. Then the judge gives him sixty days in jail for vag. After he spends one night in that coop with nothing but an old blanket spread on the floor for a bed, they give him a chance to be paroled to some farmer and work in the harvest field for what the farmer is willing to pay him. Even that beats the jail, so the hobo gives his parole and goes with the farmer. The farmers work them in crews during the harvest and threshing, so they can lock them up and guard them at night."



"The More Hoboes They Put in Jail, and the Longer They Keep 'Em There, the Better"

"Hell of a note," snorted Slim. "And they call this a free country! Ain't there something you can do about it?"

"Don't seem to be," answered Harter. "I've tried a number of things, but they have me blocked at every turn. The township is a close corporation. All the rubes are pulling together for the horny-handed and thick-headed tillers of the soil and the supremacy of the Baptist Church. All I've been able to get when I've tried to secure justice for the floaters is the merry ha-ha

"What's even worse, the judge offered to bet me that I, nor anybody else, would get a hobo out of that jail, during the next year, before his sentence expired or he was paroled. Like a damned fool, I got hot headed and took him up. The local banker is holding the stakes. I'm almost broke, so you see it would be worth something to me to get a hobo out of that hoosegow."

"How about breaking the jail?" inquired Slim. "Would that win your bet?"

"Yes," said Harter. "I have the terms of our bet in black and white.

I win the money if a prisoner is released from that jail by anything but death or parole before his sentence expires. But there isn't a chance to break that jug. It's too well built—and the marshal sleeps in the city hall right next to it."

"How about the boys digging out?" asked Slim. "I noticed the floor is just dirt."

"No chance," demurred the young attorney. "That concrete foundation goes down more than eight feet—and they don't leave anything on the prisoners that they could dig with, anyhow."

The conference continued for some time, and twilight had settled over the town when Slim finally rose to take his leave.

"I may run into that constable and get pinched myself," said Slim. "But I'm going to have a good look around and try to find some way to get Blackie out of that calaboose."

"I wish you luck, old-timer," said Harter, shaking Slim's hand. "If you get an idea that has a ghost of a chance to work, I'll be glad to help you. But watch your step."

Through the thickening dusk Slim walked across the street and took shelter in the black shadows of a grain elevator that stood beside the tracks a short distance below the depot. He meant to wait until it was completely dark and then try to slip up to the jail for a few words with Blackie. Things looked pretty tough. Their funds were low, and now it looked like Blackie was going to be stuck here in this hick jail during two months when they should be busy gathering in the good harvest wages in Nebraska and the Dakotas. Action was needed, and right speedily, too.

"Damn boodle courts and hick judges," muttered Slim. "The law's a hell of a thing anyhow. I'm no lawyer, and I ain't got no thousand-dollar bet up on it, but I'm going to get Blackie out of that coop somehow."

Darkness fell quickly, and presently Slim slipped up to the window of the jail.

"Blackie," he called in a hoarse whisper, "this is Slim. Come to the window."

"Man, I'm sure in one hell of a mess," whispered Blackie through the bars.

"Yeah, I heard that hick judge hand it to you," answered Slim. "Just sit tight. I'm going to get you out of this brig before morning or get in with you."

"I got plenty of company now," growled Blackie. "What I crave is a lot of the stuff Patrick Henry wanted."

"Just give me a little time," muttered Slim

"You can have that sixty days the judge handed me," offered Blackie.

"Thanks," said Slim. "You always were a big-hearted cuss. I'm goin' to do a little looking around and a lot of thinking. I'll be back after a bit."

"Got any cigarettes?"

"No, but I'll rustle some and bring them to you," answered Slim, moving away into the darkness.

As Slim crossed the railroad tracks, making his way back toward town, he stumbled over something that lay along the ends of the ties. Investigation revealed a steel cable. Curious, Slim followed the cable to where it ended in a large iron hook lying on the ground. He turned and followed it back. The cable was about three hundred feet long. On one end was the huge hook. The other end ran through a stout pulley which was fastened to a

huge piling beside the track, just above the grain elevator. It was evident that the cable was used to pull empty cars into place for loading with grain, when there was no locomotive in town to spot them.

Slim stood thinking for several moments. Then he began to chuckle. From where he stood he could see a light shining from the window of the little building that housed young Harter's law office. He headed toward the light.

"Greetings," grinned the young attorney as Slim entered. "You are still at large?"

"I'm still loose," nodded Slim. "And I've got a plan to let the whole kaboodle of 'boes out of that coop to-night."

"Spill it, son," invited Harter. "I'm more than ready to become an accomplice, an accessory after the fact —or what have you."

Slim sat down on a corner of Harter's desk and talked rapidly for ten minutes. The youthful attorney listened with a grin that grew steadily wider.

"My nomadic friend," cried Harter when Slim fell silent, "your plan is a diamond in the rough. Now let me polish it up a little. There'll be more excitement in this burg to-night than there has been since the Civil War. You rouse within me a sturdy hope of getting my hands on two thousand dollars in the morning. Listen to me."

At ten o'clock, Slim and the lawyer having ended their powwow, stepped out of the latter's office onto a dark and deserted main street. When Harter turned off his office lights, there remained but one lighted place on the entire thoroughfare.

"You see," said Harter. "All is quiet on the Potomac. This will be a cinch. They roll up the sidewalks in this place at sundown. If one of these hicks oversleeps a couple of hours in the morning, he just stays in bed—it's too near time to go back."

"You're sure there is no danger of there being a crowd at the depot when the train comes in?" asked Slim.

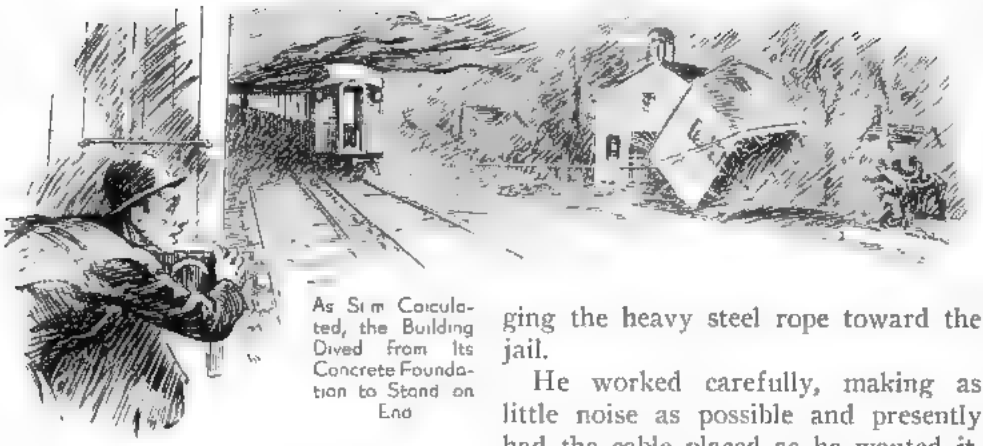
"Say," chuckled Harter, "if there should be a crowd, even a little one, at that depot at eleven o'clock, the engineer would be afraid to pull into the station. There won't be anybody there —and there's not much chance of anybody getting off the train. The train only stops to pick up a sack of mail which the postmaster leaves hanging in the baggage room, and to hang the incoming mail in its place."

"What about the town bull?" inquired Slim.

"He'll probably be up there at the drug store where you see that light on the other side of the street," answered Harter. "That's where I am going to hang around for the sake of my alibi. There are half a dozen restless souls in the burg who stay up until midnight p l a y i n g penny ante and drinking applejack in the back room of the drug store.

"I'm going up and sit in with them. You stand right here and watch. If our worthy city marshal isn't in the place, I'll come right back here and we'll try to locate him. If I don't come out of the drug store within five minutes after I enter, you will know that the law is there, baiting chance with coppers and inhaling applejack. In that case, you can safely go ahead with your rat killing."

The young attorney moved up the street and soon disappeared into the drug store. Slim stood watching for more than ten minutes, but Harter did not come back out of the place.



As Slim Calculated, the Building Dived From Its Concrete Foundation to Stand on End

"Guess everything is jake," muttered Slim, heading for the jail

Not a light showed in any dwelling within sight of the jail, and the moonless night was as quiet as the grave. Slim could hear low-toned conversation as he halted beneath the window of the little jail.

"Hey, Blackie!" called Slim softly.

The voices inside the jail grew still. Then there was a stir, and Blackie appeared at the window. Slim handed his buddy a package of cigarettes, procured from the young lawyer

"Here's smokes for the gang," whispered Slim. "Tell everybody to stay awake. I'm going to have you all out of there in an hour."

"How?" demanded Blackie.

"Got no time to tell you now," declared Slim. "I got to get busy, and besides you'll be happier if you don't know too much, until things begin to happen. Just keep the gang awake and be listening for me."

Before Blackie could answer, Slim had slipped away into the darkness. Again locating the cable that he had discovered earlier in the evening, Slim set to work unthreading it from the pulley. When he finally had it loosened, he grasped one end and began dragging the heavy steel rope toward the jail.

He worked carefully, making as little noise as possible and presently had the cable placed as he wanted it. Then he sat down on the end of a tie and smoked a cigarette, chuckling to himself now and then. He was just finishing the fag when a glare appeared on the southern horizon and the wail of a locomotive whistle told him that the night train was approaching the village. He rose and darted over to the jail.

"Blackie!" he called in a low tone

"Yes," came Blackie's answer from the black square that marked the barred window.

"Listen," hissed Slim. "There's a passenger train pulling in. When it stops at the station, all you birds lay down on the floor as close as you can pile yourselves to the south end of this jug. This hoosegow is going to fly away, and some of you may get hurt when it spreads its wings, unless you stay on the floor and right close to that foundation on the south end."

"Say, what the hell are you up to?" cried Blackie.

"I've got a big steel cable wrapped around this calaboose," answered Slim. "I'm going to hook it to the back end of this train when it stops at the depot. There's about a hundred and fifty feet of slack, so the train will have a pretty good start when she tightens the

cable. The way I've got the cable fixed, it ought to stand this coop right on end. Then you fellows jump out and follow me. I'll yell to you as soon as the jail is on its way."

"You crazy nut!" cried Blackie. "You can't—"

"Here comes the train," interrupted Slim. "Shut up and get the gang into the shelter of that foundation. I'm going to hook her on!"

Luck was with Slim. When the train stopped, the rear coupling of the rear car was not more than ten feet from where Slim had placed the big iron hook in readiness. The depot was on the opposite side of the tracks from the jail, so Slim was hidden from the men who were switching the mail sacks in the baggage room. Fastening the big hook securely into the rear coupling, Slim raced for safety in the shadow of a string of box cars on the siding that led to the grain elevator.

The train started, dragging the cable, which twisted like a big snake as it was dragged over the rough ground. The train gained speed rapidly and was doing about fifteen miles an hour when the cable snapped taut.

There was a crash and a rending roar. Slim's eyes glued to the jail, saw the little structure shudder, twist, and then leave its foundations like a tenderfoot leaving the back of a Texas mustang.

As Slim had calculated, the building dived from the concrete foundation to stand on end—but it did not stop there. The cable tightened again, just before the train came to a clattering, grinding stop. The upended and twisted structure spun on its end like a top and dived with a sound of splintering wood into the southeast corner of the city hall and pumping station

Suddenly, Slim was aware that Blackie and the other erstwhile prisoners were clambering over the uncovered and badly cracked foundation.

"This way!" yelled Slim, darting away into the darkness.

"Lead on!" capped Blackie, at his buddy's heels.

The hush of the sultry night had suddenly turned to bedlam. Crew and passengers were pouring from the train to see what had so rudely halted the iron horse. Screams of fright, questions and curses filled the air. Lights began to appear in the dwellings of the village. The several streets were alive with half dressed villagers, shouting questions as they raced to the scene of the commotion. The hurrying natives carried lanterns, pocket torches and weapons ranging from shotguns and pitchforks to monkey wrenches and nigger shooters.

The poker game in the back room of the drug store broke up and the players joined in the rush for the depot, the lanky marshal leading.

"It was that danged hobo that was in town trying to get his partner a lawyer," cried the marshal when the cause of the catastrophe had him located. "He was over to see you, Harter. What became of him?"

"I told him he didn't have a chance against you boodle court artists," grinned the young attorney. "He said he'd see about that, and left my office. It looks like he saw about it."

"I'll see about him!" howled the marshal. "Consarn your picture, if I didn't know where you've been, I'd swear you helped do this."

The marshal got busy. The train was searched and watched closely until it gathered speed, to make sure that the hoboes who had ruined the hoosegow didn't escape by rail. Then the posse

turned to a frantic search of the town. Dozens of clattering flivvers raced out the roads leading into the country, but no trace of the liberated hoboes nor of their liberator was found. It was after two o'clock when the search was finally abandoned and the searchers returned to their homes and beds.

When all was quiet, Fred Harter made his way to his office and softly beat a peculiar tattoo on its door. The door opened and the young attorney slipped inside.

"All right, boys," whispered Harter. "Follow me out the back way and don't make any noise. My car is parked in the alley. We'll push it out of town before we start the motor. I'll run you over to Stratton, on the main line in the next county."

It was just daylight when the heavily loaded car halted in the outskirts of Stratton. The young attorney, at the wheel, produced a quart bottle and held it up to the view of his passengers.

"Before we part, fellows," grinned Harter, "let's drink to your good luck. This bottle of applejack was sitting on the table last night when hell broke loose, so I stopped long enough to slip it in my pocket."

The bottle went the rounds.

"We sure thank you for hauling us over here," said Mobile Slim.

"That's all right," grinned the lawyer. "I'm going to collect two thousand dollars when I get back, and seek new fields of endeavor."

"I never harvested any of that stuff," observed Fargo Blackie. "But I'm goin' to seek new fields of wheat, if I don't get railroaded again."

"They railroaded you," laughed Harter, "but this buddy of yours surely railroaded their jail. They hadn't collected enough fines to pay for it yet, and the whole end of their city hall is staved in. I think you fellows have put one boodle court on the blink for keeps."

Eight hoboes scattered out and headed into town, and the grinning lawyer turned his car back toward where he intended to spend a profitable and amusing morning.

MUSICAL HOGS—AND HOGGERS

RAPID pulsations of the exhaust and musical notes from the locomotives greet the ears of those who are fortunate enough to live below the Mason and Dixon line. Engines on the Southern are being equipped with calliope whistles and any spring affected engineer can serenade the right of way with the old favorite songs of his land, or the new and popular tunes that he may have heard on the radio during his hour of spot

No more do the residents of small towns complain of the noise made by "that infernal whistle." Now, if they hear it at all, they just turn over and think that some one forgot to turn off the radio. It is true that the officials of the road have made a good guess and besides keeping the people happy in their slumbers they have developed a taste *for* music in most of their engineers.

Veteran Engineer Mike Brady was the first one to have a calliope whistle installed on his engine. He is one of these fellows who has developed a flair for notes and he declares that it will not be long before he can play a whole program of request numbers as he speeds along the singing rails.

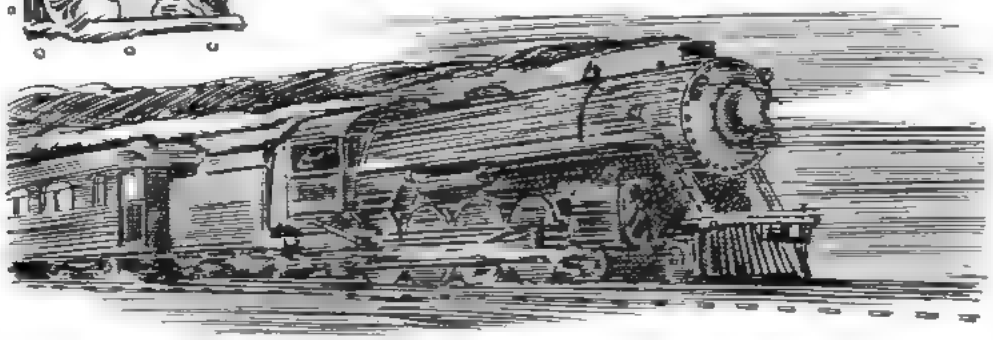
The road, the people and the crews are interested and satisfied with this new innovation and all of the locomotives are being equipped with the new whistle just as fast as they can be made.

The "Lady"

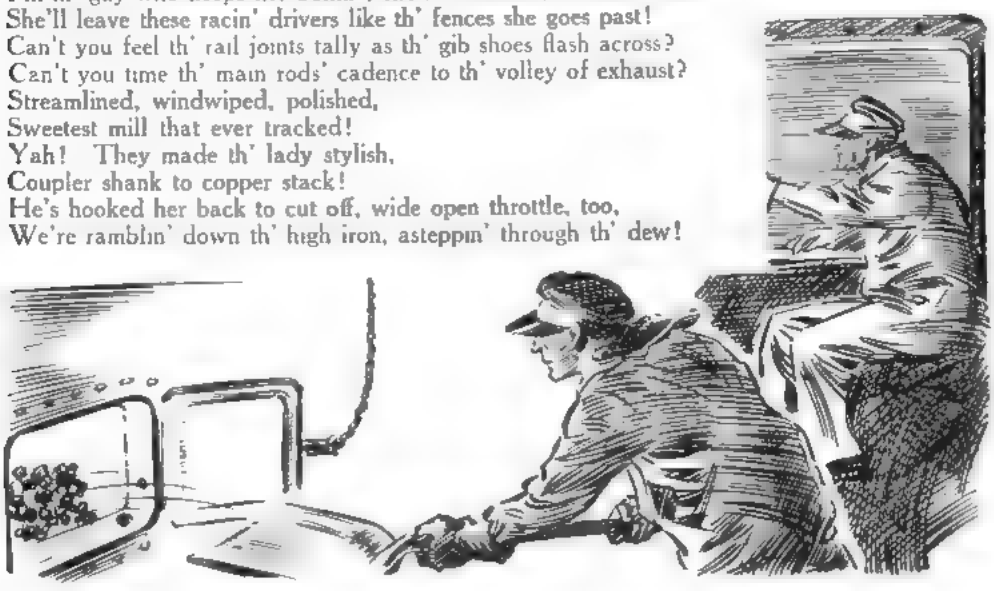
By A. W. Somerville

Illustrated by Harry C. Tempe

SWINGIN' out th' belt line, aploughin' through th' night,
Markers showin' dimly past th' stretchin' line of light,
Lever in th' corner, abelchin' up th' grade. . . .
Highball green for th' hot shot! We're off on th' long parade!
Here's th' place to feel sensations,
Know th' bite of flange on rail,
Cannonballed past dinky stations
With th' cream of th' eastbound mail!
Watch th' cab an' tank an' backhead turn a blinkin', bloody hue,
Watch th' "lady" hold her head up an' go steppin' through th' dew!

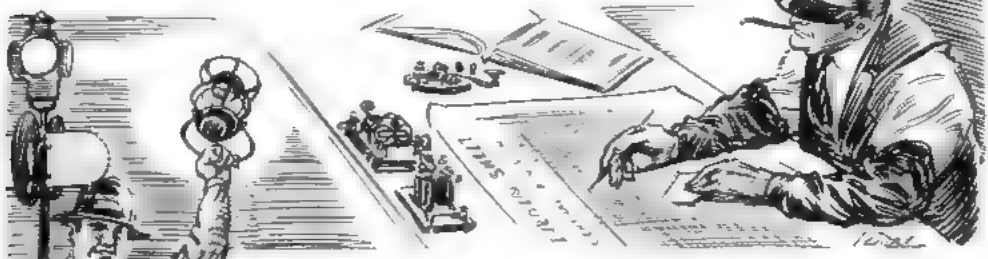


I'm th' guy who keeps her boilin'; she's a steamer, an' she's fast,
She'll leave these racin' drivers like th' fences she goes past!
Can't you feel th' rail joints tally as th' gib shoes flash across?
Can't you time th' main rods' cadence to th' volley of exhaust?
Streamlined, windwiped, polished,
Sweetest mill that ever tracked!
Yah! They made th' lady stylish,
Coupler shank to copper stack!
He's hooked her back to cut off, wide open throttle, too,
We're rambhn' down th' high iron, asteppin' through th' dew!



Eight drivers 'neath her belly, an' her lead truck wheels are four,
On each of her burnished journals sixty thousand pounds or more,
Yet from smash of th' working pistons to th' blubbering pop above,
She owns to nothin' movin' that don't fit up like a glove!
They built her well, no question,
An' we keep her up like new.
Say, we give her more attention
Than your "sweetie" gets from you.
Sweet to look at, mighty handsome, she'll do th' business, too!
Ten thousand miles each thirty days she's steppin' through th' dew!

Ten thousand miles each thirty days, waltzin' down th' track,
From twelve to twenty coaches aridin' on her back!
Twelve to twenty coaches, up to sixteen hundred ton,
Yet fifty miles is th' av'rage she makes on her scheduled run!
White smoke flat on th' cab roof,
A blur where th' main rods are,
Release valves pop like a cream puff,
Steam drifts like siftin' flour,
A vapor plume from th' whistle, she'll make th' time for you,
She's widened out, she's walkin', she's steppin' through th' dew!



Headlight blind on th' meet train, nearin' th' end of run,
Puttin' her head in th' windah, givin' th' lady th' gun,
Skyrocketin' past th' switch lamps, th' whole world by th' tail,
Sixty thousand drawbar pull an' a hundred an' ten pound rail!
Water jumpin' in th' gauge glass,
Needle goggin' to an' fro,
We're agoin' down th' railroad!
Pour it on her! Let her go!
Set your clocks as she passes! Whoo . . . Whoo . . . Whoo-oo!
Gangway for th' lady, she's steppin' through th' dew!

The Fastest Train in the World. This Is the London-Bound Express from Swindon, Which Now Makes 63.6 Miles Per Hour on Its Run

Old World Limiteds

Level Country and Light Tonnage Make Possible Europe's High Speed Passenger Travel

By Ralph Heinzen

THERE is nothing under the sun which conveys such an impression of speed as a railroad train travelling wide open. Two miles a minute in the air is nothing to compare to the thrill of a mile a minute on the steel.

Nothing expresses fast movement so much as the sight of one of the famous expresses of the world creeping into view in the distance and then, almost with a bound, passing you with a shrill howl. Wheels appear to skim along the iron, smoke trails long and low behind, ten cars flash past with a whistling swoosh

An aviator will tell you that in a cabin plane travelling at 150 miles an hour, there is no such an impression of speed as one obtains from a train travelling but fifty miles an hour. In the skies there are no fenceposts, no villages, trees or signal arms to flash by the window in a constant kaleidoscope

Yet Europe's great hot shots are not so speedy to-day as they once were. The substitution of steel for wood, adding greatly to the weight as well as

the safety of trains, has taken its toll of speed.

To-day, the fastest train on wheels, on the Great Western in England, is the express between Swindon and London. It makes an average of 63.6 miles an hour in a run of 70 minutes into Paddington station. Yet there was a time before the war when this same train ran its race with the speed indicator almost constantly at 83.5 miles an hour.

The fastest train in the world is English, but the second fastest is American, and the next four fastest are French, running on the almost water level rails between Paris and the Channel ports where steamers are waiting for the London-bound passengers and mail

The fastest British and American trains crack better than a mile a minute. The best French express, hauled by steam, does an even mile a minute, and the best French electric train, the famous Sud Express, between Bordeaux and Dax on the way to the Spanish frontier, does exactly 59.3 miles an hour, the fastest that any electric train travels on schedule in the world. The speediest train in Germany moves at an average of 55 miles an hour, while the best trains in Italy and Spain average less than 50 miles an hour, largely because of weak roadbeds and necessity for constant stops.

There is a new movement toward speed, but it is unlikely if there will ever again be a train as fast as the famous Swindon-Paddington Express of before the war which topped 80 miles an hour steadily.

There is an effort to get greater sustained speed by nonstop expresses, and in that field America leads Europe, largely by means of the track tanks

The Third Fastest Train on the Globe. France Boasts of This Run at Better Than a Mile a Minute

The Southern Belle, an English Train Which Shakes 'Em Up Between Channel Ports and London

and scoops which permit the locomotive to take on water without slackening speed.

While in America, it is not uncommon for a limited to travel vast distances without a stop, such an accomplishment is unknown in Europe. It is considered remarkable that the famous Northern Star and Blue Bird Expresses, running between the Belgian and French capitals, accomplish the voyage without a stop, although 190 miles separate Paris and Brussels.

In England there are better examples. The London-Edinburgh Express on the L. N. E. railways runs 392 miles without a halt, and the London-Carlisle trains for 301 miles. In the case of the Edinburgh Express, the crew changes during the trip, the relief crew

The Merseyside Express Has an Average Speed of 55 Miles an Hour from London to Liverpool

walking a "cat's-walk" from the first coach to the locomotive, and the tired fireman and engineer going back the same way for rest.

As matters stand now, the ten speediest trains outside of the United States are the following:

1. England, Swindon to London, 77 miles in 1 hr. 10 min. Av. 63.6 m. per hour.
2. France, Paris to Saint Quentin, 92 miles, 1 hr. 32 min. Av. 60 miles.

The best German train runs between Hanover and Ham, a distance of 107 miles in 1 hr. 57 min., an average of 55 miles an hour. The Berlin-Hambourg Express runs it a close second, 175 miles in 3 hours 14 min.

France, however, with its advantageous contours, is really the land of fast trains. Right now there are sixty-seven regularly scheduled trains in France which maintain an average of

The Irish Mail, Highballing Out to Holyhead Long Bridges Slow This One in Running Time

3. France, Sud Express, Bordeaux to Dax, 80 miles, 1 hr 29 min. Av. 59.6 miles per hour.
4. England, Darlington to York, 44 miles, 43 min. Av. 59.6 miles.
5. England, Leicester to Nottingham, 22.6 miles, 22 min. Av. 59.6
6. England, London to Kemble, 88 miles, 89 min. Av. 59.6 miles
7. France, Paris-Etaples, 136 miles, 2 hrs. 20 min. Av. 58 miles.
8. France, Paris to Saint Quentin, 92 miles, 1 hr. 35 min. Av. 58
9. England, London to Bath, 106 miles, 108 minutes. Av. 58
10. England, London to Bristol, 118 miles, 2 hrs. Av. 58

55 miles an hour or better. Most of them are on the famous Nord Railway, which has to itself the entire northeast quarter of France. This country is comparatively level, the roadbeds are practically new, having all been rebuilt since the war.

The fastest train in Continental Europe is the famous No. 185 which does Paris-Saint Quentin in 1 hr. 32 min., for a distance of 92 miles. Ten years ago, there was not half of this roadbed in place. For four years it had been under the bombardment of heavy guns and airplanes. That part

which remained whole was subjected to the heaviest sort of traffic. So badly was it used, that the railroad company simply rebuilt it from top to bottom over its whole length

The French roads have come to steel cars, after several disastrous accidents, and this will greatly increase the weight of the trains. Realizing that heavier locomotives will be needed, France is now studying the American Pacific, 4-6-2, Mountain, 4-8-2, and Baltic, 4-6-4 types.

Wherever possible, France is electrifying her roads. The Orléans system, especially, southwest of Paris to the Spanish frontier, has been electrified over much of its length. This system owns extensive waterpower rights in the Pyrenees and these captured chutes will soon make it possible wholly to replace steam with electricity.

The French have never come to considering their locomotives as historical monuments or toy gadgets. The English decorate their most famous expresses with gaudy names, and the locomotives are always given the title of some famous figure of history.

For example the locomotive of the famous Golden Arrow on the Southern Railroad, which links London with the Channel for travellers headed toward Paris and the South, is named "Howard of Effingham," after a famous Lord who once owned some stock or something.

The British locomotives would be the joy of any small boy. They are painted in maroon or dark green, with red or blue trimmings, and brass work, and usually are highly polished. It is not unusual to see floral designs painted under the window of the engineer's cab, or a great silver star across the front of the smoke box. All this adds to the picturesqueness of British travel, without adding much to its comfort or speed.

These trains all use hard coal, which

The Royal Scot, Streaking North to Glasgow. A Famous Name and a Famous Train the World Over

The Golden Arrow, Known on Two Continents, Is One of the Most Luxurious Hot Shots in the World It Carries You to Paris

is dainty in contrast to the pressed bricks of coal dust which the French trains, even the expresses, use. The fireman of a French express could blow his coal into the firebox, for it generally finishes in powder form regardless of how carefully he stacks away his pressed coalbricks at the start.

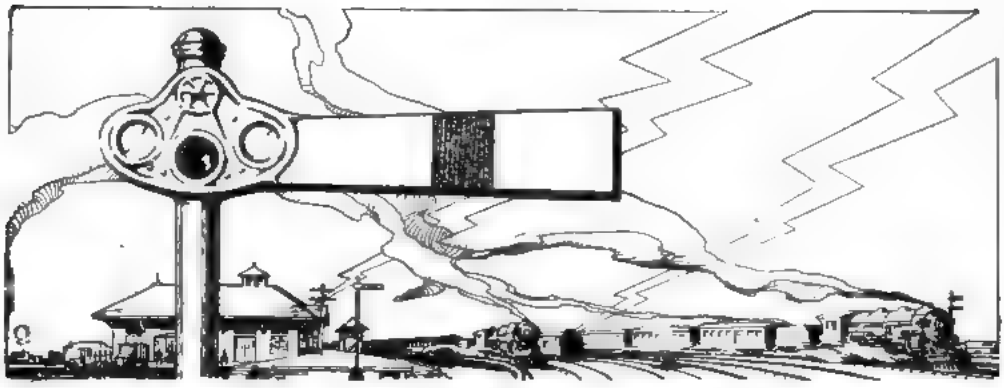
An unusual feature of the cabs of these Continental expresses is the call board. Every compartment on the train is fitted with an emergency signal, generally a handle which drops from the ceiling. In case of an attack by bandits within the car, the accidental opening of a door with the resulting fall of voyagers, or for any other serious reason, the passengers are privileged to pull the signal.

This shows immediately in the cab. There is a red light flashed before the eyes of the engineer. Then on the call board, which is fitted to every car in the train, there is a blue light to indicate in which car is the troubled voyager.

The train stops immediately and the engine crew, armed with anything handy, drops off and goes back to the car into which the men peer carefully. Sometimes they find a passenger who celebrated with Bacchus his impending voyage He generally listens to some very picturesque profanity, for French railroad men have a language all their own which is as hot as their fireboxes

But sometimes the crew is called upon to settle a riot which grew out of an argument between passengers, or tie up a murderer or bandit. Some very heroic records have been established by the crews of these Continental hot shots, with the result that it is indeed rare now to hear of assassinations or attacks on trains in Europe, whereas at the start of the century any bandit would prefer to work in the closed compartment of a fast train than in a house to which he had keys.

My Greatest Thrill



A department where true experiences of railroad men are related. Prompt payment at good rates is offered for narratives of personal thrills. Each story must be verified.

Peg-Leg's Wild Ride

Fate Grabbed for His Toll as a Frozen Train Line Hurled Men and Rolling Stock at the Drawbridge

By L. H. Cruncleton

MY railroad experience dates from 1904; and for a few colorful years thereafter I boomed across the country hither and yon, persistently chasing that elusive something that all boomers seemed to be seeking. This rainbow's end always gave promise of being just over the next hill — but it is hardly necessary to state that this phantom was never overtaken. It always beckoned from a distance. Now, as I look back, I marvel at my persistence and wonder why I didn't accumulate enough sense from the hard knocks to stay put on at least one out of these numerous railroad jobs. But I guess the urge for adventure was too strong in my blood. And I've had my share of thrills too

The one that I remember most distinctly happened when I was braking out of Slater, Missouri, on the Chicago & Alton, back in 1913. It was, as near as I can remember, in late March or early April.

The spring thaw had set in and was breaking up the ice in the Illinois River, but it was still cold as blazes. The incident referred to was a runaway down what was then called Straut Hill and across the drawbridge over the Illinois River. And I'm not

exaggerating when I assert that I got a scare. I'll never forget it.

I had been working there only a short time when this happened, and was not very well acquainted, so I cannot recall the name of a single member of the crew, except the engineer. His name was Morris. The reason I remember him is because he wore a peg leg due to turning an engine over on himself in time past. They called him Peg-leg Morris.

At that time the C. & A. was handling a hotshot dressed meat connection through to Chicago. It was solid train stuff, and was due out of Slater in the late afternoon. And believe me no excuses were accepted for failure to make the time.

I have forgotten the exact date, but I caught one of these runs, called for 6 P.M., with a ten-wheeled engine and twenty-seven cars of meat—all reefers. As I was one of the youngest in seniority, I fell heir to the head end. That suited me anyway, for a hot boiler-head on a cold night was a boomer's idea of easy money.

The dispatcher gave us right over the world, except first class trains, so we ambled right up to the top of Straut Hill, which was 137 miles east of Slater, and 19 miles west of Roodhouse. And there is where the fun started

The Straut Hill was not a heavy grade as grades go — about one and one-half per cent, as I remember it—and it was less than five miles from the summit to the foot. But it dropped down through some pretty rough country, and was as crooked as a barrel of snakes. That was the only real bad feature about it.

At the foot of the hill was a siding and telegraph office called Pearl. A water plug was located at the east end of the siding so that trains heading in there found it easier to cut off the engine and come around on the main track to get water, than to stop and cut off on the main line before heading into the siding.

Just about one-half mile east of Pearl the railroad crossed the Illinois River over a drawbridge. This river was open to navigation and clear of ice most of the year. Numerous steamboats and other vessels plied up and down, making it necessary to keep a watchman on duty to operate the bridge and to clear trains across it. A red semaphore signal was displayed against all approaching trains, which was cleared to green when called for, if the bridge was closed.

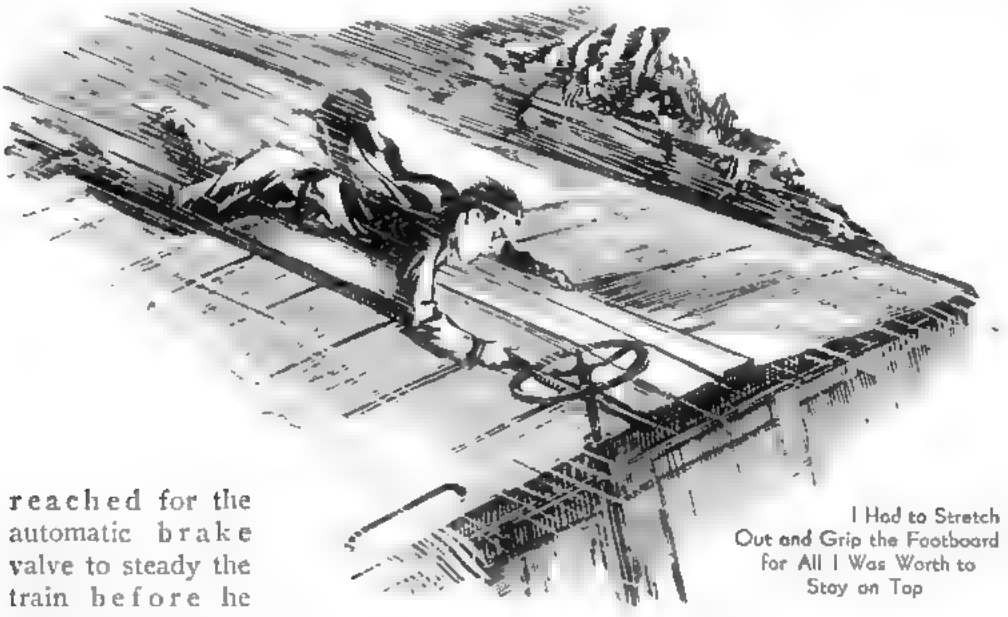
When we topped the hill at Straut we were about ten minutes late on our schedule. Instead of easing off and working a light throttle until the whole of the train was over the summit, as was the general custom on any grade, Peg-leg just reached for the Johnson bar, hooked her up and kept going. I was never able to dope out just why Peg-leg wanted to give that train such a start, because the gravity pull alone would have been sufficient to get that train up in the air.

I guess his main idea was to get down to Pearl as quickly as possible, take water there, and oil the engine around without losing any more time. And, too, should the drawbridge be open, as was frequently the case, it would more than likely put us on short time to make Roodhouse on schedule. Peg-leg must have been a little worried about not making it, because he worked steam for a mile before he shut off.

We were making about fifty miles per hour then. I was watching him, for he had me worried. In those days

I felt that I could ride 'em about as fast as any hoghead cared to roll 'em—if the track could stand it. But I didn't think this first curve—or any of the rest of them—would stand the stuff Peg-leg was putting out. Peg-leg must have felt the same way, because he for safety lay in staying on and stopping if we could.

But Peg-leg didn't lose his head. He put that hog in back motion, widened on the throttle, and nearly tore her to pieces. I have never seen so much fireworks come from a stack or from a set



I Had to Stretch Out and Grip the Footboard for All I Was Worth to Stay on Top

reached for the automatic brake valve to steady the train before he took the curve.

The air had gone haywire!

Certainly it showed up all right on the duplex gauge—seventy pounds brake pipe, and ninety on the main reservoir—but instead of hearing the usual long-drawn hiss that issues forth when the air is working properly, Peg-leg heard a weak gurgle. We had no more brakes on that train than you find on a wheelbarrow.

If you have never been on a runaway train you should by all means be on one so that you can know how we felt. Some people might think it funny, but you can bet we didn't, because there wasn't a possible chance of escape. One look at the fleeting scenery took away all desire of joining the bird gang. Obviously our only chance of drivers. But that little ten-wheeler didn't have a Chinaman's chance. She wasn't even heavy enough to keep the slack bunched. We hit that first curve like a landslide and went around it on two wheels. I've long since quit trying to figure out how we made it.

The roar she made as he spun her backward, together with the terrific jar and grind of machinery and violent lurching of the engine, was terrifying. To make it worse the clapper of the bell started hammering out blue murder at each lurch, and old Peg-leg added a blood-curdling call for brakes.

Realizing at once that the engine wasn't having any luck, the fireman and I decided that some arrangements

had better be started about setting up some hand brakes. We took the coal pick as a brake club and crawled back over the tender to the top of the first car and managed to set the brakes on it. Then by working our way carefully we reached the second car and got it set up—but that was all!

That little two and one-half foot space between the second and third car might as well have been the Grand Cañon. The pitch and roll of that train, added to the clanging and banging, was horrible. I cannot describe it. In less time than nothing we were making eighty miles per hour if we were making a foot—and gaining at every turn of the wheels. As the rear end was always out of sight around a curve, I wondered what the conductor and hind brakeman were doing.

The meat in those cars was suspended from the ceiling to allow free circulation of cold air around it, and this meat was swinging and thumping a terrific tattoo against the sides of each reefer. This did not tend to mitigate the lurch and roll any, which was already so violent that a man couldn't even stand on hands and knees. I had to stretch out at full length on the footboard and grip it with hands, knees and feet for all I was worth to even stay on top. Each time the car rolled it thumped against the trucks, and I felt like I was out on a long limb with somebody trying to shake me off.

For good measure the wind pressure threatened to strip us of our clothes besides freezing us to death. High above the awful clamor came the nerve-racking squeal of flanges rising in swift cadence as the speed increased. The way we were going to town was nobody's business. It appeared as if Peg-leg was due to lose another limb.

It was no less than a miracle how that train stayed on the rail. The only thing that saved our skins was the short length of the hill—we were down it before we attained that last ounce of speed, which was necessary to make the flanges climb the rail.

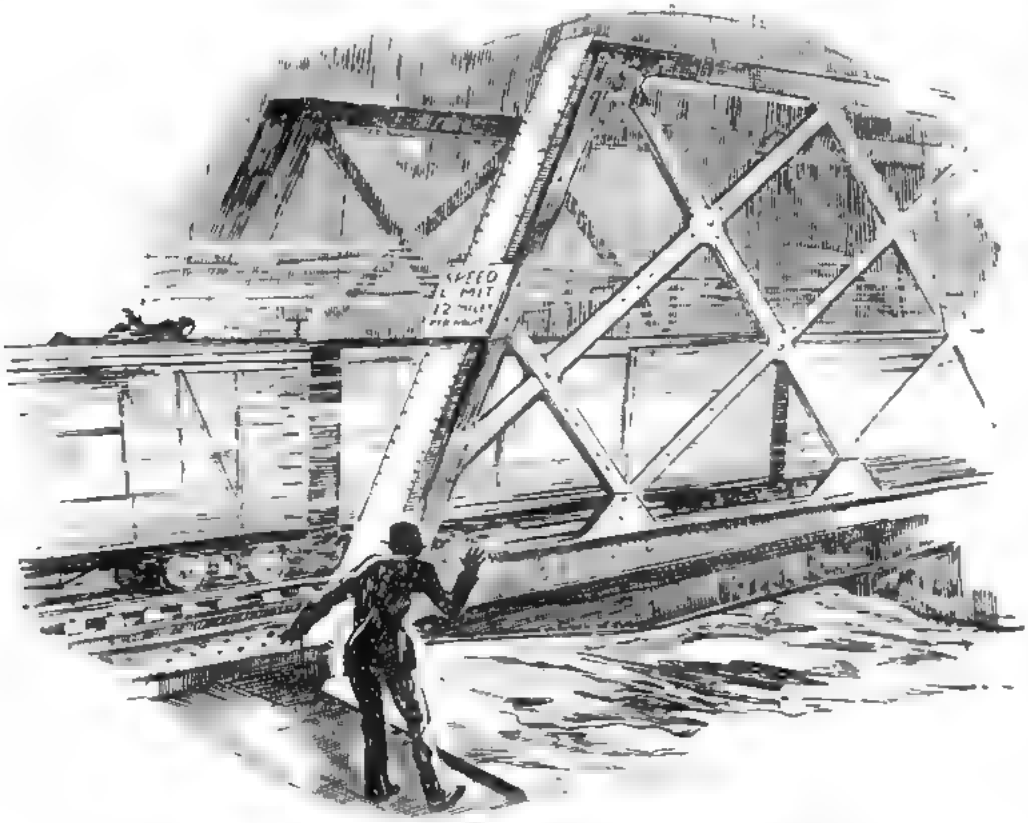
I hugged the footboard for grim life, expecting each second to go hurtling through space. I could feel the hair on my head raising like the hackles on a dog. Terrified, I gripped that footboard and waited for the end, but curious as it may seem, I found myself debating on whether the drawbridge was open or closed. I made up my mind if it was open I would jump off rather than ride that train into the river, although I knew that the stretch of track between Pearl and the bridge was riprapped with bowlders from the size of a house on down. But at the moment I preferred the bowlders rather than the river. I might hit a soft one.

While I was thus debating, we shot around the last curve into Pearl at a ninety-mile clip, and I caught a fleeting, blurred glimpse of a train standing on the siding. Apparently they had been out on the main for water and had just run back in the clear by a scant margin of a minute or two. That was a contingency that had missed me entirely—but what we didn't know we didn't worry about. Two minutes more though and we would have kissed those bullies an awful smack. They evidently thought nothing was wrong because they wished us on our way with numerous violent highballs and fancy curlicues of their lamps.

Highballs! What we wanted was a stop sign!

Old Peg-leg never had stopped whistling for brakes, although it's a mystery where he figured we'd gone. The

operator misunderstood the squawks and cleared the board for us, but it wouldn't have made any difference if he hadn't—we were on our way. I pictured the amazement of that crew and operator as we shot by. Funny what quirks a man's brain will pull in time of danger.



The Thunder We Made Crossing the Bridge Must Have Reverberated Up and Down the River for Miles

We made the one-half mile from Pearl to the drawbridge in nothing flat, with me trying to peer through the murk ahead. I could see the red semaphore, but could not make out whether the bridge was open or closed. Peg-leg had the presence of mind, however, to squall for the signal, and glory be, the watchman was right on the job that night, for he cleared the signal while Peg was still calling. Not that it would have slowed us up a bit if he hadn't, but it was a mighty relief to see that red eye change to green, for it told that the bridge was closed. I guess the watchman got a little surprise, too, that night, for I got a brief glimpse of him standing in an unmistakably frozen attitude as we smoked by.

The thunder we made crossing that bridge must have reverberated up and down that river for miles, for we were only exceeding the speed limit over it by about eighty per. I expect we loosened every rivet in the whole structure.

As I have stated before, the track from Pearl on to a point about one mile across the river was almost flat, and from there it mounted sharply on a hill of about three miles in length. As we straightened out on this stretch of track the terrific pitch and roll began to abate, but the speed did not diminish perceptibly until we hit the hill beyond the bridge. We rolled about halfway up that hogback, with old Peg still working on her. Finally we stopped, and it was a white-faced but relieved crew that gathered on that engine. The conductor and hind man had taken the same dose we did, only they crawled back in the caboose after they quit trying to set up hand brakes. They knew it was safer there.

We found the cause of the air failure between the second and third car. One air hose was frozen solid. Out of that twenty-seven cars we had two cars of air! It so happened that the train line back of those two cars was just tight enough to leak off slow and not set the brakes.

We cleaned out the hose, pumped up the air, tested it and then backed over to Pearl to get a tank of water. After all these maneuvers we got away from Pearl only ten minutes late, and went into Roodhouse on time for the simple reason that our schedule down Straut Hill was slow on account of the curves. Peg-leg had not only made up the ten minutes we were late, but had come into Pearl four or five minutes ahead of our schedule. I've often wondered what the result would have been if that crew at Pearl had used two or three minutes more in getting water. Worse yet—what would have happened had the bridge been open?

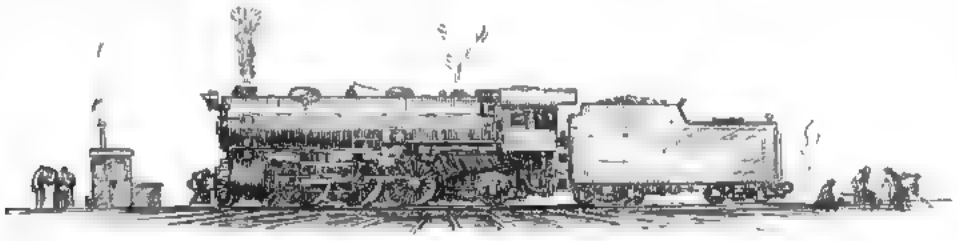
What came of it? Nothing. In those good old days such little incidents did not go on record.

That was nineteen years ago. If Peg-leg Morris is alive to-day he will recall the incident; and although my version as to what happened may be somewhat distorted by fright and faulty recollection, the main facts at least are correct. Some of the old-timers at Slater will no doubt remember the happening.

ENGINE MODELS TO BE SOLD

WHAT has been called the most unique collection of locomotive models ever gathered is to be sold under the will of Samuel M. Felton, late chairman of the board of the Chicago Great Western. Models of many famous engines can be found in this collection, some executed in silver and gold. There is a model of the locomotive by which Abraham Lincoln was taken to his first inauguration, given to Mr. Felton by his father, who was president of the railroad over which it ran, the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore

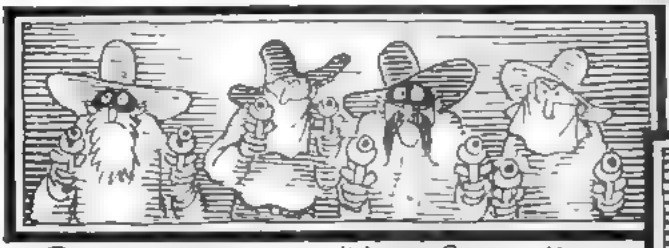
Some of the models were given to Mr Felton by the French government in recognition of his war service.



JUST A FEW YEARS

JAMES J. HILL, THE EMPIRE BUILDER, ASKED A GROUP OF ST. PAUL CAPITALISTS FOR BACKING TO BUY THE ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC RAILROAD.

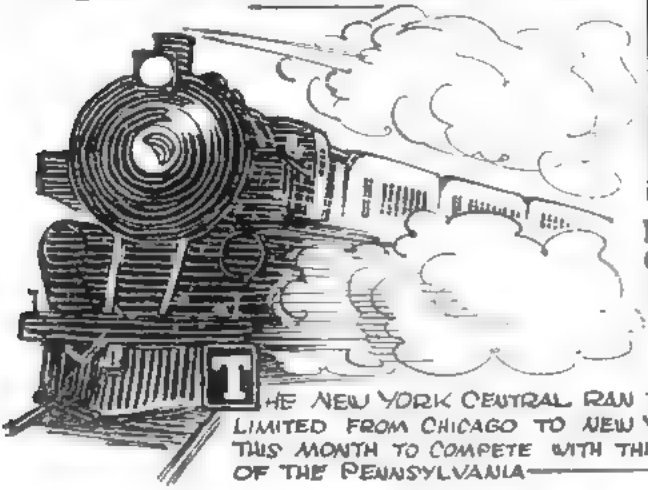
WILLIAM B STOREY, PRESIDENT OF THE SANTA FE, WAS DRIVING STAKES FOR THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC AT TWENTY DOLLARS A MONTH.



SOCIETY NOTE FROM WAYNE COUNTY MISSOURI

THE YOUNGER BOYS CALLED ON THE STATION AGENT AT GAD'S HILL LAST NIGHT ABOUT THE TIME THE LITTLE ROCK EXPRESS WAS DUE.

P.E.C. "PULL EIGHTY CARS" CROWLEY, THE NEW GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE N. Y. CENTRAL, AT SYRACUSE.



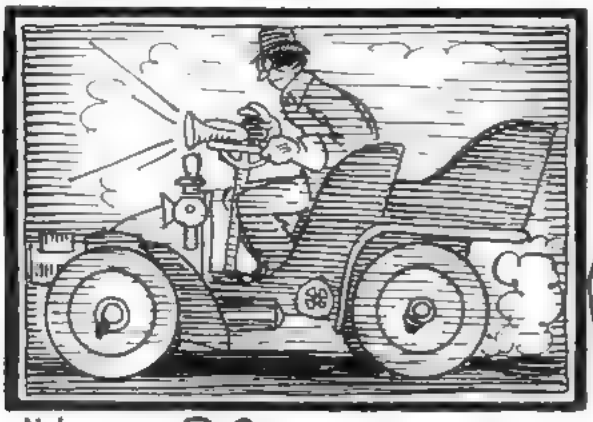
THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAN THE FIRST 20TH CENTURY LIMITED FROM CHICAGO TO NEW YORK 25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH TO COMPETE WITH THE NEW 18 HOUR SCHEDULE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA

BACK

BY C. KESSLER

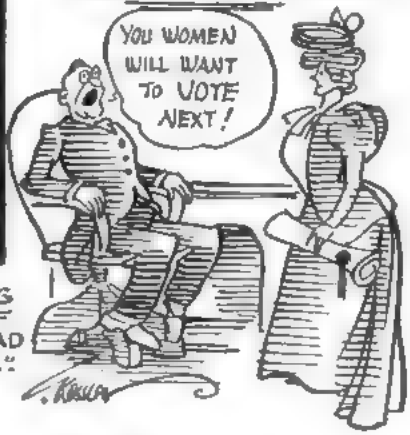
JOHN J. BERNET, PRESIDENT OF THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO, PERE MARQUETTE AND HOCKING VALLEY RAILROADS, WAS DIVIDING HIS TIME BETWEEN HIS FATHER'S BLACKSMITH SHOP AND THE RAILROAD STATION AT FARNHAM, N.Y.

GEORGE J. GOULD.
THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE WABASH RAILROAD.



WALTER P. CHRYSLER, THE YOUNG MASTER MECHANIC IN THE SHOPS OF THE CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN RAILROAD GOING TO WORK IN HIS BIG "RED DEVIL."

THIS WAS NEWS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.



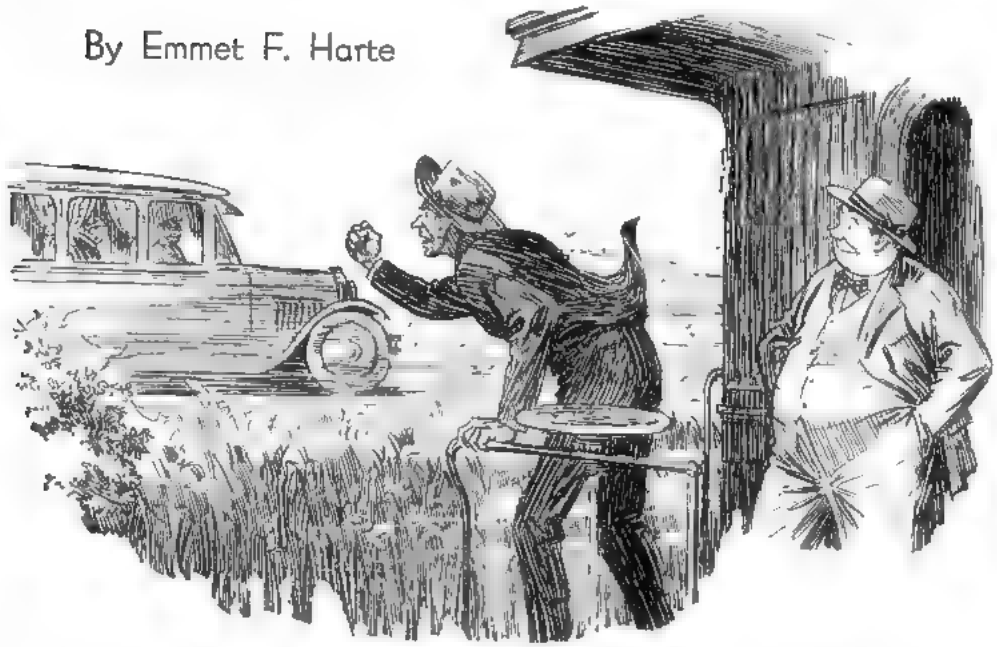
A WOMAN WAITING FOR A TRAIN IN THE RAILROAD STATION AT MINNEAPOLIS LOST HER BUSTLE IN WHICH WAS FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

MISS ETTA SNYDER, OF PHILMONT, N.Y. APPLIED TO THE N.Y. CENTRAL FOR A POSITION SHOWING A DIPLOMA FROM THE RAILROAD EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROOKLYN WHERE SHE TOOK A COURSE IN ENGINEERING BY CORRESPONDENCE

Honk and Horace

They Had a Great Idea for Fine Revenue with Fine Feathers, but the Management Said No

By Emmet F. Harte



"Come Outta Your Showcase and Fight, You Dressed Up Bay-rummer Ape!"

THE erstwhile assistant foreman of Section B-24, Mr. Hancock Simpson, seemed to find a lot of inspiration in the job of conductor on the dinky branch train which made a round trip daily (except Sundays) from Valhalla to Red Rock. Personally, in my capacities of brakeman and flagman on the same train, I saw nothing to get puffed up over.

The train's consist was almost comical. An engine and two wooden cars. The engine was a vintage Rogers, 1879, cylinders 16 x 22, drivers 56 inches, working pressure 140 pounds, tractive force 11,862 pounds. She had a smoke stack like you see on a pump shanty, tall and slim like a lonesome pine, and a pilot of the long, hungry type called a "cowcatcher." Going round a short curve it would reach out and cut down a horseweed away over next the right of way fence. One car was a quadro-mail-express-baggage-smoker; the other a day coach with stoves and oil lamps. All the outfit needed was a coonskin nailed on the back door of the day coach to be the real old pioneer stuff.

But Honk was as fussed up over being punch pusher thereon as a hen that has hatched out a goose egg. Somebody loaned him an iron hat badge bearing the word conductor to

distinguish him from the rest of the help on his first trip. Later he bloomed out like a wondrous morning glory in uniform—but that's anticipating.

Our leaving time outbound was 8 A.M. We stood made up, half an hour ahead, on a stub siding west of the station. Number 10 from the west, better known as the Wildflower Limited, was due at 7.41. It usually had twelve cars with a mountain type racer pulling 'em. One of those 75-inch driver babies weighing 180 tons. It was some outfit. Our little jitney, compared with it, was an example of jumping from the profound to the absurd. But not in Honk's estimation. That first morning, and all subsequent mornings, he strutted back and forth on the platform with the pompous gusto of a drum major prancing in front of a fifty-piece band. When the zero hour arrived, he flaunted two fingers in a highball, a gallant gesture, like a courtier waving to a king. The ourang-outang who pawed the throttle for us was an Ike named Harvey Tibbs, generally called "Rufus" for short. He'd learned locomotive engineering with a threshing machine outfit, running the steam-spitter for seven consecutive seasons. Rufus missed his real calling. He would have won laurels as the eagle-eye for a portable sawmill somewhere back in the tall timber. Until she blew up on him, at any rate.

We didn't have a passenger to start with on our first trip. I for one felt like we'd drawn what is technically known as a "dead one" when we signed up for that run. The prospects were punk for anybody lit up with the hot flames of ambition, I thought. Still, I've never been one to sneer at an easy job. And this one looked easy. Ours was the only train on the line, so making time didn't bother us. There wasn't any flagging to do, and no gates to open and shut. The branch was fifty miles long, with two towns—High View and Green City—*en route*. There were six or eight other stops at points where trails crossed the line. But Rufus would stop any place for anybody to get on or off.

A couple of miles out of Valhalla we disappeared in a jungle of tall sunflowers and other flora. The track was old iron spiked to S-shaped ties laid in dust. After a rain this dust changed to thin mud which squirted at the jack rabbits sitting in their nests on the lone prairee. Yo, ho, mates! Heave on more slack, and let the clinkers fall where they may!

While Honk was working his train—that is, looking under seats for a chance stowaway—I piled down on a couple of seats at the rear of the day coach for a nap. He roused me arbitrarily within a few minutes. The solitude made him talkative, I guess, or else he wanted to show his authority, maybe.

"Come out of it," he bawled. "Sleeping on duty? You can't get by with that while I'm in charge of this train, my comatose friend. What do you think you are? A night watchman? Just because traffic is light to-day doesn't warrant you—"

"Is traffic light to-day?" I asked. "I thought it was entirely suspended. My calculating sense tells me that we're going to operate this here common carrier at a loss on the down trip. And the up trip will likely set us back some more—"

"Um," he replied, draping himself over an empty seat back. "Things do look haggard for a fact, Horace. The volume of business on this run seems to be nil. I'm afraid there's a screw loose somewhere. It's up to us—or

me, rather—to discover the African in the fuel pile. No reason why this train shouldn't pay a nice profit."

A sudden whoosh of thick black smoke came fogging into the coach through the front door which Honk had left open. At the same time a hail of clinkers and pieces of coal rattled on the roof. The knight of the scoop up ahead apparently had gummed his fire. But the old smudge pot had a hearty draft at that. Our fireman was an ex-plumber's helper; a toolbag toter, named Buck Jinks. I learned later that this was his second trip. Well, he had seniority rights over me, anyhow.

"Ca-hick, ca-hack!" I said, expectorating a chunk of soot. "The tallowcan up front must be a neophyte. Too bad if a fuel inspector should catch him. Black smoke is a capital offense, isn't it?"

Honk clawed a handful of slack from his ear.

"Jeepers, yes," he sputtered. "I'll have to give that rook a tip. Woof!" And he ran to shut the door.

By the time he got it shut we had a coach full of the real old essence of bituminous. So I oozed out on the back platform where the tincture of tar and sulphur was slightly flavored with dust.

Honk joined me. We came to a place where there had been a forest fire in the weed jungle which made a gap that revealed the adjacent landscape. A fine concrete highway ran right beside the railroad. Automobiles and other motor vehicles were scurrying like ants along the smooth trail. I observed a large sky-blue and lemon-cream-colored bus scooting along abreast of us. It was packed with passengers.

I flicked a sardonic flipper.

"There goes our patrons," I remarked. "The public furnishes a free track for our competitors. When the weather's nice they skim off the cream of the business. If it snows or rains too hard they stop running till the taxpayers fix up their right of way for 'em. We help foot the bills. It's a lovely system."

My compatriot gritted his teeth. He didn't have to look black in the face; his face was already coated with an ebon veneer of coal dust. He growled in his throat. The bus driver, a natty young squirt all bedizened up in an azure uniform, with cap and Sam Browne belt, glanced over the fence and saw us. He piled insult on injury by grinning and twiddling a gloved hand in the time-honored signal that calls for bare bodkins at sunrise if red blood weren't dishwater in men's veins nowadays.

Honk lost his temper. He leaned from the platform like a raging Othello and yelled opprobrium and revilements with the unstudied abandon of a stewed dray driver in a street jam.

"Come outta your showcase and fight, you dressed up, bay-rummed ape!" he bellowed. "Fish worm! Perfumed polecat! Nincompoop! White-livered pink rabbit! Bird seed eater! Toy poodle pup! Ice cream soda bibber!"

The canary bird thus denounced cupped a fin back of his ear.

"What'd je say?" he yawped. "Say it louder and slower—and funnier."

"Omigawd!" Honk mourned. "The addled oaf can't hear me. He's deaf. You reckon that's one of the requirements? Do bus drivers have to be deaf in addition to being half-witted and varnish-haired cake eaters—"

"Not knowing, I do not know," I confessed.

We clickety-clicketed round a curve and vanished into another weed patch. The bus wasn't in sight when we came in view of the highway again. Presently we made a scheduled stop at High View. Nobody got on or off our train except us. At Green City the same thing happened.

Between Green City and Red Rock we saw another bus, a red and yellow one. Its driver seemed to be a jolly, friendly kind of nitwit, and waved genially. If the poor gump had only known it he would have escaped a big lot of hate if he'd paid no attention to us whatever. His spacious carryall was full of passengers. And his sociable overtures merely made Honk froth at the mouth and shriek maledictions.

"I'm going to get me a sack of grenades," Honk declared. "And I'll practice bombing those whelps every time we pass one. Curse 'em!"

"You'll only get yourself confined in a padded cell. The days when things were adjusted by shooting and cutting are past. The strong arm has been superseded by the sinewy head. Mind is a heap more powerful than muscle," I advised.

II

We were interspersed with coughing and choking every time friend Buck threw in a fire. That lad was a whiz with a scoop and a cinder-shooter, no spoofing. But he got his when we arrived. Honk was loaded for him. He was stuffed with the rancor he'd generated against the bus gondoliers, and he took revenge out on Bucky. I guess the one time torch-bearer for a dilly-dallier with drains thought Hades had busted in his face. He learned something about spreading his shots, too, I fancy.

I abhor quarreling, so I eliminated myself. We had five hours to lay over in Red Rock, getting in at 10 A.M. and trundling out on our solitary return trip at 3 P.M. This unexciting wait was parted in the middle by lunch at the Tripe and Onions Restaurant. During the odd time, I scuttled about seeing the sights of the hamlet.

There was one street and a couple of alleys. Wooden sidewalks. A Beehive Store. Those of the populace I saw apparently had no means of support other than the walls of the business and public buildings. They leaned against things and stared at whatever went by. A futile way to spend one's threescore and ten years, egad!

But hold the old nag, Newt, there was one industrial enterprise in Red Rock worth a news item in the annual anniversary edition of the biweekly *Times-Chronicle*. The Pottery Factory. I visited it. It was over back of the Y on the creek. Owned and operated by a genius named Sam Sanborn. I met him. We had a common ground of congenial contact. We were both members of the Order of Solemn Owls.

Sam was an easy-going man in his mid-forties. He owned a valuable deposit of clay, enough to keep his ceramic project going for a couple of hundred years at least. And he was the inventor of a species or breed of pottery that was a wow. It was a cross between prehistoric and futuristic. He called it Maya or Aztec pottery. Strange, weird stuff, queerly painted and fantastically shaped. Every sort of thing, dishes, bowls, jugs, vases, cups, pitchers, urns, plates, platters, and pots. A great line of junk.

But he confessed to me, a brother of his order, that he wasn't doing enough business to unbalance his books

hardly. Somehow, his handiwork didn't sell. He had a good-sized warehouse full of unsold pottery. I felt right sorry for him. He was a likable kind of jasper personally. I listened politely while he told me his life story. When he began to run down a little, I interspersed a remark or two. I picked up a pot-bellied jug.

"What's the price of this?" I asked him. It was all colored up like a Navaho blanket, with rainbow decorations and Indian hieroglyphics on it.

"Seventy-five cents," he said.

"Hum, ha," I commented. "If you'd ask seventy-five dollars for it - and get a furore started for your line of stuff—you'd make a killing."

"I wish I knew how to get one of those what-you-call-it started then," he said.

I assumed my wisest air.

"Leave it to me," I told him. "I'll fix it for you."

We congratulated each other and I left. I hadn't a wisp of a scheme concocted to help him out at that time. Maybe an idea would come, maybe it wouldn't. No harm in cheering him up anyhow. I ambled back to earn my emolument as a cog in the great machinery of transportation. Our train departed on time. There wasn't anything to delay us. No passengers showed up. A bus left Red Rock about the same time. It was packed full.

Honk fumed and spewed anathemas. He seemed to take the lack of passenger business on our train as an affront to him personally. He also viewed the busses as rivals who were carrying on an underhand, unfair, and unspeakably vile sort of foul competition.

"Why beef?" I questioned. "This is easy picking. A soft snap. I for one enjoy these nice undisturbed rides back and forth. Think of getting pay for doing what is actually pleasant. Your suggestions to the fireman up ahead have helped, too. I haven't swallowed but two or three small lumps of coal so far. Or possibly the wind's changed—"

But no, Buck was improving. Sometimes a clout over the coco, figuratively speaking, works miracles. And Honk had certainly clouted the lad over the coco about his black smoke proclivities —figuratively speaking. My disgruntled chief of staff spied another bus stuffed with happy travelers through a rift in the elder bushes just then, and detonated in another tirade.

"What I'd like would be to put those parasites out of business," he yammered. "If I could only get the sheep-headed public to see its own stupidity. It's driving the railroad into bankruptcy, destroying the only sound and dependable transportation service this country has ever had, merely to indulge a transient fad. A novelty. The human race is certainly one large herd of short-sighted asses, Horace—"

"Yeah?" I murmured. "But it don't flatter 'em to remind 'em of it. You can't catch flies with vinegar, my dear sorehead. Er—" I mused—"leave it to me. I'll fix it all fine and dandy for you. We'll have the public flocking to ride on this train—"

"You—you mean you've got an idea?" he quavered dazedly.

"Well, no," I admitted. "But I will have. I'll leave it to my subconscious mind and a clever plan will pop into my head when I least expect it."

"Humph!" he grimaced disgustedly. "If that's our only hope, we're sunk."

Well, I'm impervious to the scornful so-called contempt of people who haven't anything to offer themselves. Honk simply looked like what he was, to me. A two-for-a-nickel conductor

without a uniform on a defunct branch local without passengers. Huh! With the monumental gall to sneer. "O, wad some power the giftie gie us, to see oursel's as ithers see us!" Quotation from Robert Burns.

The subconscious mind moves in mysterious ways to perform prodigies of ratiocination, if you're familiar with the word. I wasn't either until I looked it up. Two days passed without excitement. We had a passenger one day from High View to Valhalla. A man with a large horse's tail mustache. I visited with him. Asked him why he took a notion to ride on our train. He said he had to go that day, and had contrived somehow to miss the bus, so the train was his only chance. I did not pursue the subject farther. I had, you might say, caught it and didn't care for it.

Honk was all suffused with a scheme to put on a campaign of propaganda through the Chamber of Commerce, All Nighters' Club, Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Elks, Moose, Eagles, Woodmen, Solemn Owls, Parent-Teacher's Association, Red Cross, and Salvation Army, to drum up business. He thought of getting Minute Men to make speeches, and persuade or bully people into signing pledges to boycott the busses. I kept neutral, waiting for Old Subconscious to kick in. But apparently Old Subconscious was unconscious. I did submit some hints.

"You must reach the women," I pointed out. "They're the invisible janes who are behind everything in the world. Working silently—and not so durned silently either. Anyway, they're keen on little frills. Ducky curtains, bright colors, fuss and feathers. The busses are all dolled up, with pretty varnish, starched seat covers, and window draperies festooned back. Look at our equipment in contrast. Plush all worn off like the fur of a mangy burro. Grime on the woodwork. Coal dust, smoke fumes. Dirty windows. You have to spit on 'em and rub to make a hole you can see through. Nothing novel about that. What we need is to renovate and redecorate—"

But it was at the cinema where I got the Magic Vision, the great revelation. I often get noble ideas at picture shows. The film was a super-all-talking—with everybody singing at the same time—Broadway hit, of course, called White Hot Passion, or The Flaming Fury of Love, or something, laid in a tropical climate with a Follies chorus of forty girls dressed to represent alligators, parrots, monkeys and so on, and the hero caterwauling hither and yon. But that had nothing to do with my big idea. I was given a numbered coupon when I went in. Later, the lights were turned on, and there was a drawing from a hat on the stage. Those holding the right numbers won fine prizes.

I almost swooned from emotion when my number was called. Imagine my embarrassment and proud gratification when I scampered down the aisle, shouting "Here it is! Habet! I have it!" and came back blushing like a bride carrying a large green glass pitcher, all for my own. The women and girls in the audience showered me with envious and admiring smiles. Women and girls dote on prizes won—no matter how, where or when. They're born gamblers and chance takers, women are. Else they'd never marry. Anyhow, they adore getting something for nothing—or what they think is nothing.

In that moment of triumph Old Subconscious did his stuff. I hurried home and mapped out the complete working

chart of my splendid vision. I had to see Sam Sanborn before putting it into execution. I'd promised Sam, my brother Owl, that I would succor him in his time of need, and I was now ready to make good. I also had made a solemn covenant with Honk, too, binding myself to step forward in the dark hour and prove my contention that I was Johnny at the rat hole. And I was prepared to make good all bets.

We ran empty to Red Rock next morning. Honk was in one of his sulking moods. He refused to talk to me, or even to listen to my blithe flow of conversation. So we severed diplomatic relations, and sat silently listening to the rattle of coal and cinders on the coach roof. But Buck was getting better day by day in every way, if I may use an expression which has been rejected by the higher schools of medicine. Buck could actually chuck in a fire without obscuring the sky The old teakettle still tossed coal from her stack now and then, though. We'd have to muzzle her.

I conferred with Sam Sanborn.

"Will you furnish me with samples of your pottery for judicious distribution far and wide, in an intensive advertising campaign?" I asked, straightforwardly and in words of several syllables.

When the substance of my talk seeped into his ivory-armored understanding, he declared that he'd do that and more.

"I'll give you a carload of Maya ware to scatter around from supper to breakfast," he promised. "As it is, I can't sell it, so I might as well give it away."

"All right, I'll pick out a bunch of stuff now," I said. "You can send it over to the station this afternoon."

That part was arranged. I selected a choice array of urns, ewers, bowls, and platters. A truckload to start on. Sam promised to deliver it f. o. b. Red Rock. Allah is great, and Mahomet is something of a warm number. We rattled out at three sharp. All alone as usual. All alone sounds like a song, but it wasn't. Honk felt more hopeful. He'd thought of another society to enlist in his silly campaign, The Baby Beef Raisers!

"Listen, Unconscious," I suggested. "See if you can prevail on the Coach-cleaners' Association to administer an annual mopping to our rolling stock. Get 'em to use lye, curry combs, soap, water, disinfectants, and other cleansing agents. Then wheedle the paint shop out of some new paint and varnish, and the world is ours."

"Hum, ha," he conceded. "Maybe there's something in what you say, at that. I've just thought of something."

But he wouldn't tell me what it was. He smirked, and let out vague insinuations about a surprise he was planning to spring on me. And me with a sure enough surprise I had concealed in my sleeve for him.

When luck breaks for you, it surely does it copiously. All things work like greased slides for them that don't take "no" for an answer. Just to show you. That evening I figured on seeing a friend of mine by the name of Wirt McCulley. It was a business matter I wanted to see him about. Wirt was an advertising solicitor or something for the Valhalla *Daily Courier*. He was a brother Owl besides. I desired to throw a slug of patronage his way—an ad to be inserted in his paper—and as my liquid cash capital was not so very copious at this time, I hoped to get the thing arranged on a deferred payment basis.

Angels handled the affair. Inquiry developed that Wirt was at the Owls' lodge room. It has a lounge and reading and billiard parlor for members. So I galloped thither. I found Wirt implicated in a stud game, deuces wild, two-bits limit. Stud is one of my pet diversions. Duck soup. At midnight, quitting time, I was quite a little to the good. Among my trophies was an I. O. U. from Wirt McCulley for five smackers. Then I abruptly remembered about my advertisement.

Having described same, outlining the text and all, we figured up the damage in column inches or whatever it is. The job would cost a sawbuck, Wirt said, for one insertion. And the space not half as big as my hand. No wonder newspaper publishers are multi-millionaires, the brigands! A fancy struck me.

"I'll cut the cards, ace low, to see whether you owe me ten simoleons or nothing," I proposed. Wirt is a game rooster. He accepted. We cut. He owed me ten simoleons.

I directed him to write and run the ad in his next issue which came out at daylight. We prepared the copy then and there, and he took it round to the office. The gist of it was that all passengers on the Red Rock branch of the Transcontinental until further notice, riding on a full fare ticket and getting off at either end of the line, would participate in a grand free prize award of rare ceramic ware, values of prizes running up to a hundred dollars or more, and winners being determined by lot. Drawings to be held daily except Sunday.

III

So far so good, as the guy said as he was passing the halfway place when he fell into the Grand Cañon. All that remained was to garner in the sheaves. Four or five hours' sleep set me up in fine fettle for another day. But I had one of my justly celebrated hunches that this was going to be more than just another day. I was approximately correct. I was astir early. Cantered up town, clicked down a bite of breakfast at a nameless restaurant with a sign in front stating the word EAT and nothing else, after which I scurried to a stationery shop and bought a quarter's worth of small blank cards. The clerk loaned me a numbering stamp, and I affixed numbers on a couple of hundred of the little pasteboards. My plan was to have Honk give each passenger a numbered card when he collected that person's ticket. The number-holder would present said card if he won a prize; if not he could eat it, or suit himself.

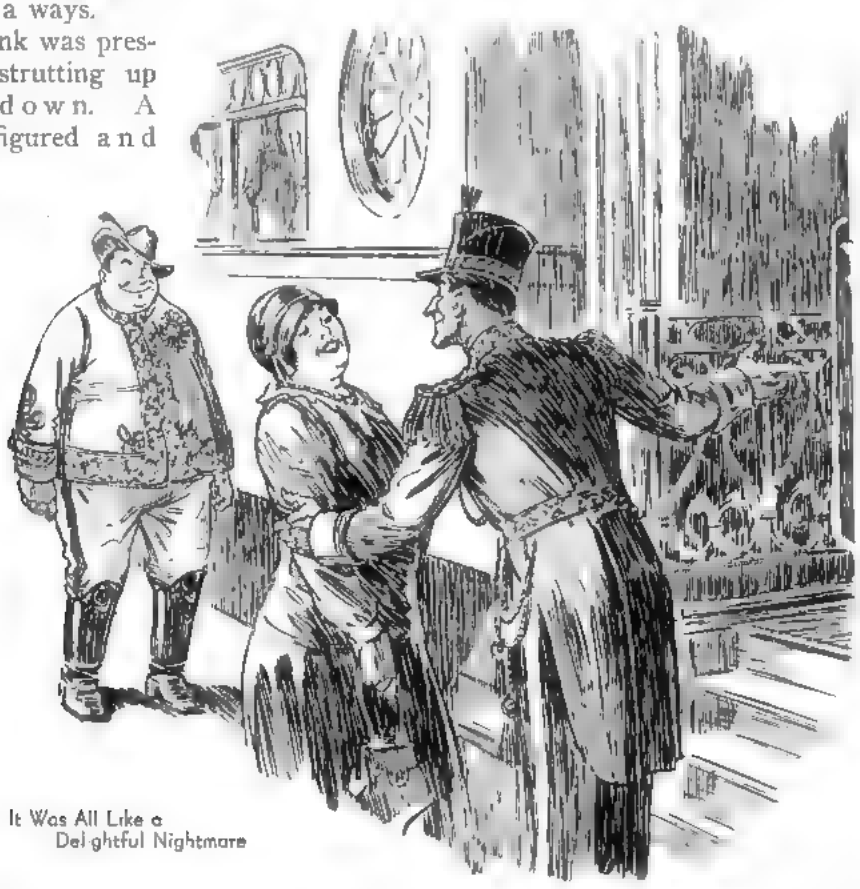
I reached the scene of my impending triumph at 7.41 A.M. I was all expanded with trenchant words to be used in announcing my wonderful scheme to Conductor Simpson. I pictured his amazement and abject homage. Possibly a few prize-seeking passengers would be on hand to try their luck. If so—

Then I saw something. My colorful speech turned gray and poofed out like thin smoke. I gulped and a wad of chewing gum was gone. Ye gods and undersized fishes! What had happened? I propped myself against a baggage truck and gazed aghast. I was gaping at the fevered fantasies of a hasheesh-eater's dream, no less.

There before me waited a train on the Red Rock branch track. Three strange cars, bedecked in fanciful colors; red, green, blue, yellow, tan, orange, orchid, and intermediate shades, in splotches, streaks, stripes, and smears. The style of decorative

art was called camouflage in war time. It was said to make ships and guns invisible. But in peace time, it certainly accomplished exactly the opposite. Those three cars were visible for miles. You could *hear* 'em quite a ways.

Honk was present, strutting up and down. A transfigured and glorified Honk. All dolled up in a purple uniform. Yes, sir, bright reddish purple with cap to match, and festooned with frogs and epaulets and ropes and tassels of rich gold braid. Boy, howdy! Quick, Ermitrude, the sal volatile! And a handful of éclairs please.



It Was All Like a Delightful Nightmare

"Ah, there you are," twittered my gorgeous friend. "Yoicks, Horace. Shake a leg, and get into your uniform. How do you like our new train"

"Uniform—new train—" I recited, much like a parrot. "Who, what, where?"

"Calm's the word," he soothed. "Fox trot into the front car, and look inside a locker at the left. You'll find a whole wardrobe of glad rags. Bedeck yourself, my boy. Don't stop to argue, now. Everything will be made clear later. It's quite all right. We're going to have several passengers this trip. Business is starting already. Keep a cool head, and pour yourself into a bunch of appropriate clothes, pronto."

Well, I obeyed his orders. I was too dazed to quibble. Inside the train I became still more befuddled. The cars were palatially appointed. Fringed curtains at the windows, buffed leather upholstery, fumed oak finish. Carpet

in the aisles, frosted glass and burnished copper lighting fixtures. La-de-da and oop-de-doo.

I found the locker. It was in a combination car, part stateroom, part parlor and club. There were clothes enough to garb a militia company. All kinds of fancy duds. I selected a suit that looked about my size, something conservative; a bright scarlet coat trimmed in golden autumn leaves, and grass green pants with yellow stripes down the leg seams. Knee high patent leather black boots and an Alpine climber's hat with a blue goose feather in it completed my embellishment. I flatter myself that I looked like a cock pheasant from the upper reaches of the Yang-tse-kiang.

Utterly uninformed as to what had happened, but with a tight hold on my aplomb withal, I flickered outside in time to see six or eight ladies being gallantly assisted aboard by Sir Galahad Simpson. It was all like a delightful nightmare.

Rufus hooked his mechanical rattletrap to the string of rainbows and we floated off. Meanwhile I grabbed Honk by the gold braid and towed him into an inglenook in the forward car. There I showed him the blurb in the morning *Courier* and glibly sketched the salient points of my prize pottery scheme. He hailed the idea with gibbering enthusiasm. He was a trumpeting optimist in his purple raiment.

"Splendid!" he indorsed. "Horace, that was a divine idea of yours. But we won't draw the numbers out of a hat. We'll use a fortune wheel. There's one in the property closet yonder. Lemme tell you about these coaches, my boy. They belong to a carnival troupe that got stranded over at Millardsville. The Transcontinental attached the cars and contents for a delinquent bill; unpaid fare for transportation; a couple or three thousand plunks, I believe. They pulled the outfit over here to store it in the car yard. When I saw these lovely cars I realized they were what we needed. So I borrowed 'em. Framed it up with Tom Riggins, the yard gorilla, and he had 'em set for us. In the event of a row, I take all responsibility, see?"

I saw. Honk's guarantee made everybody safe, including us—but no matter. "Whatever became of Tom's partner—Jerry?" I asked facetiously. But Honk had heard that one.

"Oh, shut up," he said. "I must skip along now and work my train."

He pranced through taking tickets, with glorified me at his heels. I handed out the numbered cards to our happy passengers. Patrons that day were all women and girls. Members of the so-called gentler sex. They're gentle if you don't rile 'em, and they do so love a hazard. But they're as cunning as lynxes—I mean minxes. Every smiling lady threw a smoke screen to becloud the real issue.

"Such an adorable train!" they exclaimed, and simply cooed over the dashing courtesy and service of the train crew, too.

"You know," one talkative lady said, "I've been planning to take a trip to Red Rock for ever so long. And I never travel on anything but the railroad. Those awful busses!" She rolled her eyes with horror. "They simply bounce the life out of one, and—" Here she sissed something in the ears of the ladies nearest her. "Perfectly terrible! Herding passengers into such places—" I caught the word "rest rooms," or it may have been "restaurants." Anyhow, there was a chorus of shocked titters.

I smiled sophisticatedly. The lady

seemed to know a lot about bus practices for one who never rode on anything but railway trains. Our passengers waxed gushy over the luxurious comforts of train traveling. They patted the upholstery, praised the springiness of the springs, fingered the texture of the window curtains, and asked when the prize drawing would be held. Bridge tables were improvised, and several veterans of the sport of queens opened their hand bags and produced their trusty packs. Presently, they were merrily taking one another to a cleaning at half a penny a point.

At every crossroad we took on a passenger or two. Folks who had found it convenient to run over to Susie's or Nannie's and spend the day. And don't think all the auction experts live in town, either. Some of 'em live back of the beyond. I saw apple-cheeked mammas wearing last year's bonnets, with hands that had plucked and fried many a chicken for threshing gangs, bid five no trumps and make a small slam like it was all an inconsequential detail of the day's dreary routine.

We rambled into Red Rock forty-five minutes late. But nobody cared. Our premier prize drawing was held after arrival, since the pottery pieces were stored there so far. After that first day we carried a stock of stuff on the train so that drawings could be consummated on board shortly before we pulled into terminals. Since we had a plentiful supply of the rare and inviting Maya ware, and we were getting it for nothing, we saw no reason not to be liberal when it came to awarding prizes. We gave three grand prizes, and four near-grand prizes, announcing the values in sums from $150 down to $75. Values were wholly based on our appraisals. We could price the stuff to suit ourselves. And nobody questioned the figures. They were glad to accept them, the higher the better.

IV

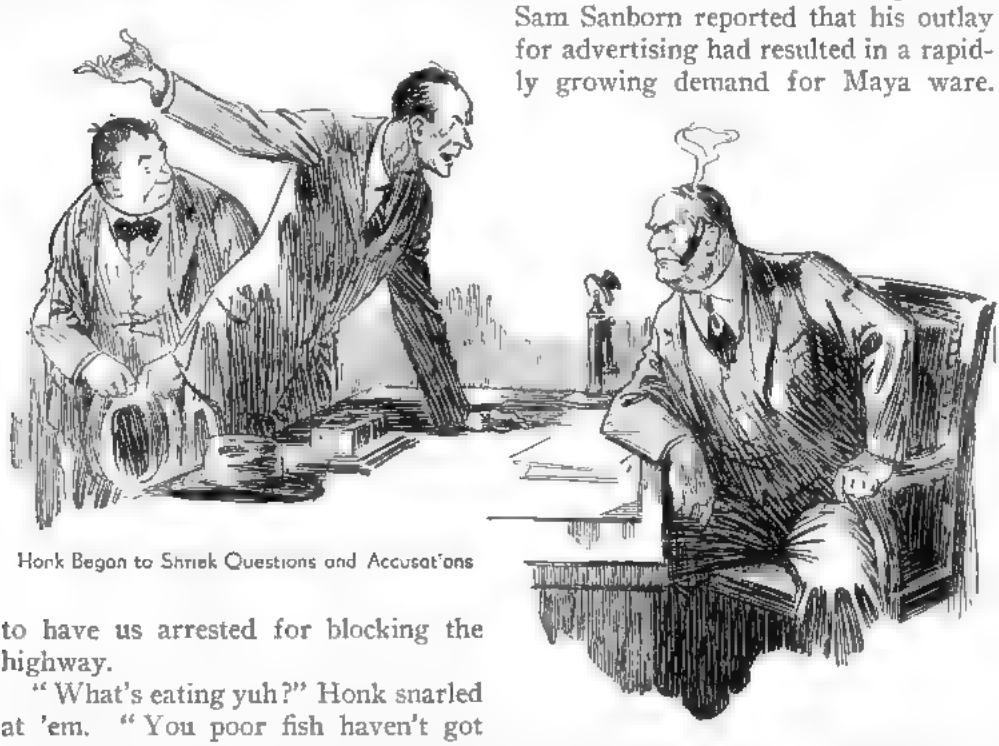
THAT was the beginning of an era of unprecedented prosperity for the Red Rock local train. We carried a capacity load every trip. Mostly ladies as a rule, although a sprinkling of specimens of the so-called lords of creation found it incumbent to travel with us frequently. Women always have a following.

Women are also full of odd quirks. Somebody conceived the clever idea of holding club meetings on the train instead of at different hotels and in private homes. So we carried large parties back and forth. Study clubs, Shakespeare societies, missionary, dramatic and literary associations, leagues, circles and sororities. And political cliques, too. All getting a shot at a valuable bunch of Maya pottery, going and coming.

But speaking of the bus business. Our vile competitors were getting theirs all right. Such glimpses as we obtained of them through gaps in the scenery showed a radical falling off of passenger patronage. The big buggies were running practically empty now. Joy and bliss. Honk gloated continuously. He took an impish glee in taunting the drivers on all occasions. A crowning affront was accomplished one day when he arranged with Rufus to stop on a crossing of the highway, and block it for twenty minutes. An empty bus waited on each side. Rufus and Buck pretended that the teakettle was out of fix, and pretended to tinker with the valve gear or something.

Meanwhile Honk and I got out in our carnival costumes and said sar-

castic things to the despised minions of a scurrilous system. I wore a different outfit that day. Yellow breeches and a pink blouse with a black velvet bolero. And a Russian grand duke's fur cap of ermine, white and black spotted. I guess I looked too formidable to tackle, for the cake-eaters kept their distance. But they talked a lot, and threatened



Honk Began to Shriek Questions and Accusat'ons

to have us arrested for blocking the highway.

"What's eating yuh?" Honk snarled at 'em. "You poor fish haven't got any passengers. What does it matter whether you make a trip to-day or not? Turn around and go back where you came from. And when you get there, hand in your resignations. You're through. Get you a job hauling garbage. Bah!"

He pretended to be highly upset over the delay, and galloped around looking at his watch, and consulting Rufus and Buck.

The trick was so satisfactory that we played it frequently. We thought up new insults and opprobrium to hurl at our rivals, during our spare time. It was very gratifying to get 'em cornered and gaff 'em. And watch 'em squirm.

V

INCIDENTALLY the passenger revenue on the Red Rock branch was climbing. We were taking enormous profits. We'd eliminated competition Sam Sanborn reported that his outlay for advertising had resulted in a rapidly growing demand for Maya ware. He was booking orders from dealers in towns he'd never heard of. I helped him revise all his prices upward. My method was simple. I added two naughts to each quotation. If it was 5 cents, I made it read $5, and so on. Sam declared I was a mathematical and financial genius. I agreed with him. That made it unanimous. He vowed he would make me a complete set of weird dishes for a wedding present. But destiny has gone out of the way to prevent me from getting them so far. Well, 'tis better to have loved and lost, etc.

I was thinking more about getting promoted than getting married, I'm afraid. A man can't waste time with sentiment and prospective wedding presents when he has his cart hitched to a star. I still had my mind set on a brass collar. As I doped it out, Honk would presently be called to take charge of a main line run, one of the flyers, and I would step up to the skipper's place on the local. From that to trainmaster, superintendent, and on up like a rocket was a matter of knocking the persimmons as they came within reach. A simple task and suited to my taste.

Honk and I tripped forth to work that sunny morning all innocent of misgivings. We reached the station at the usual time. We had only to change into our gay uniforms to be ready for big business. It was our custom to leave the carnival clothes in the coach locker each night and wear civilian togs when off duty. Arrived at the station a shock awaited us. Our bright-colored train wasn't there. Nothing was there. No animated throng of waiting passengers. No bustling hurly-burly. Only emptiness, silence. For a minute I thought we'd made a miscalculation and come to work on Sunday, a droll thing to do. But no, it wasn't Sunday. Yet something was horribly wrong. We loped into the ticket office. Two women were just leaving, with frowning faces. I caught the words "take the bus." The Gloomy Gus behind the wicket told us the sad news.

"Red Rock train's discontinued," he growled. "Permanently annulled. It ain't never going to run no more," he declared in his frightful usage of our well known language.

"But—but—" we remonstrated.

"See the big boss," he counseled. "Don't block the window, please."

We ran excitedly to the division office building, and burst in upon old Savage in his lair as unceremoniously as two alarmists coming to holler "Fire!" He gave us his best glowering scowl. Honk began to shriek questions and accusations. The superintendent held up a hand for silence. Silence reigned.

"The company has had an application in for permission to abandon the Red Rock branch for about a year," he said. "The commission finally granted the request. We intend to tear up the track and remove what buildings are worth salvaging."

"Good land o' Goshen!" swore Honk. "That train's a bonanza. We've put it on a paying basis. It's a big revenue producer. Check up the returns for the last month—"

"Yeah, it's been paying expenses for a few weeks, that's true. But that don't offset the losses for the last five years. We're a million dollars in the hole on that infernal train. We'll be mighty tickled to let go, you bet."

"And there's our pretty train, too. The women passengers simply loved it," Honk howled, with tears in his voice.

"Oh, those show cars," Savage snarled. "The bird who owned 'em kicked in with the coin finally, and claimed 'em. Number 60 took 'em east last night."

Our castle of cards crashed around us

"Well, what're you going to do with us?" Honk queried in a still small voice. "We made a record on this run—"

"You two are on the extra list," Savage barked. "Anything else? All right, good morning. Shut the door after you as you go out."

THE END

Our Own Language

A List of Words Which Have Become an Important Part of Railroading in North America

AGE—Term of time in service, usually referring to seniority
AIR MONKEY—Air brake repairman.
ALLEY—Clear track
ANCHOR THEM—Set the brakes on still cars.
ARTIST—A general term usually referring to some workman, particularly adept, and usually with such prefix as brake, pin, speed, etc.

BABY LIFTER—Passenger brakeman.
BAKEHEAD—Locomotive fireman
BATH—Sometimes used in reference to taking water at a tank where the spout is short or not adjusted properly.
BATTING 'EM OUT—Used generally by switchmen when goat has hold of a string of cars kicking them all over the yard.
BATTLESHIP—Usually referred to the superheater type or any large locomotive.
BEANERY—A railroad eating house.
BEANERY QUEEN—Waitress.
BEE HIVE—Yard office
BELL BOTTOM BRAKEMAN—College student
BELL RINGER—Fireman.
BEND THE IRON—Change the position of a switch
BEND THE RUST—Change the position of a switch.
BIG HOLE—Emergency position of the air brake valve; the act of abruptly applying brakes to the full reduction.
BIG HOOK—Wrecking crane
BIG O—Freight conductor.
BIG OX—Conductor of either freight or passenger
BLACK DIAMONDS—Company coal.
BLOW UP—To quit a job suddenly.
BOARD—A fixed signal regulating railroad traffic and usually referred to as slow board, order board, clear board (for clear tracks), or red board (stop)
BOILER HEADER—Riding in cab
BOOMER—The drifting type of railroad man who travels from road to road and stays but a very short time at any one place. The term was derived from the pioneer days of railroad booms along new frontiers and originally was applied to men who followed these boom camps.
BRAIN PLATE—Trainman's badge
BRAINLESS WONDER—Conductor, engineer, fireman or any official who does queer things in the opinion of their fellows
BRAINS—Conductor
BRASS COLLAR—Applied to members of the official family.
BRASS HAT—A term applicable to officials.
BRASS POUNDER—A telegraph operator.
BROWNIES—Demerit marks placed against an employee's service record.
BROWNIE BOX—Superintendent's car.
BUGGY—Caboose; passenger car; box car
BUG TORCH—Trainman's lantern
BULL—Special agent or railroad police officer.
BULLGINE—Steam locomotive.
BUMPER—A post at end of spur track.

CAGE—Caboose.
CALLER—Employee whose duty it is to call out a train and engine crews
CALLIOPE—Steam locomotive
CANNED—To be taken out of service
CAPTAIN—A term applied to conductor, either passenger or freight.
CAR TOAD—Car repairer, there are many variations of this word viz: car knock, car tonk, car whack, etc.
CAR WHACKER—Car repairman.
CASER—Silver dollar.
CENTURY—Hundred-dollar bill.
CHARIOT—Sometimes applied to passenger cars, but most frequently to cabooses.
CHASING THE RED—The act of a flagman who has gone back with red flag or red light to protect a train.
CINDER CRUNCHER—A switchman
CINDER SNAPPER—Passenger who rides the open platform on observation cars
CLOWN—A switchman or yard brakeman.
CLOWN WAGON—Caboose
CLUB—Hickory pole about three feet long found on some railroads and required by the management to be carried around by a trainman in addition to his raincoat and lantern
CLUB WINDER—Switchman or brakeman
CORNERED—When a car, not in the clear on a siding, is struck by a passing train or engine.
CORN FIELD MEET—Where two trains meet head-on, both trying to use the same main line
COW CAGE—Stock car
COW CATCHER—The pilot.
CRIB—Caboose
CRIPPLE—A defective car or one that needs repairs
CROAKER—Doctor
CROWNING HIM—Coupling a caboose on a train when it is made up.
CRUMMY—Caboose

CUPOLA—The observation tower on a caboose
CUSHIONS—A term referring to passenger cars
CUT—A few cars attached to the goat or engine; several cars coupled together anywhere.

DANCING ON THE CARPET—Called to the superintendent's office for investigation or discipline.
DEADHEAD—Fireman's vernacular for brakeman; employee riding over the road on company pass and on company business.
DECK—The floor part of a locomotive cab
DECORATE—The act of riding on top of freight cars as required on mountains or passing stations on certain railroads.
DETAINER—Usually applied to the train dispatcher.
DIAMOND—Crossover.
DIAMOND CRACKER—Fireman.
DICK—Railroad detective
DINGER—Yardmaster or assistant yardmaster.
DINKY—Engine without tender used around roundhouse and backshop to do the switching.
DOG CATCHERS—A crew sent to relieve a crew that has become outlawed.
DOG HOUSE—Caboose.
DOLLY—Applied to switch stand
DOPE—Orders; official instructions
DRAG—A heavy train of dead freight; any kind of train.
DRAW BAR FLAGGING—The act of a brakeman leaning up against the draw bar on the caboose to protect the rear end of his train.
DRINK—To take water for the locomotive.
DRONE CAGE—Private car
DROP—A switching movement
DRUMMER—Yard conductor.
DUCKETS—Hat checks.
DYNAMITER—A car on which a defective air mechanism sends the brakes into full emergency when only a service application is given from the engine.

EAGLE-EYE—Locomotive engineer.
END MAN—The brakeman or rear brakeman, usually on freight trains.

FAMILY DISTURBER—Pay car
FIREBOY—Locomotive fireman
FIRST READER—Conductor's train book
FIST—Operator's handwriting.
FLAG—To work under an assumed name.
FLAT—A type of freight car.
FLAT WHEEL—A car wheel that has flat spots on the tread; also applied to an employee who walks lame or limps.
FLIMSEY—Train order.
FLOATER—Same as a boomer.
FLOP—Bed.
FLYING SWITCH—See drop.
FOG—Steam.
FOOT-BOARD—The step on the front end and rear of switch or freight engines.
FREEZE HUB—Cool a heated journal.
FROG—An implement for rerailing wheels.

GANDY DANCER—Track laborer
GANGWAY—The space between the rear cab post of a locomotive and the tender
GARDEN—A freight yard.
GATE—A switch
GENERAL—Yardmaster
GLIMMER—Switchman's lantern.
GLORY—String of empties; death by accident.
GOAT—A yard engine.
GO HIGH—The act of decorating or climbing to the top of box cars to receive signals or to transmit signals or to apply hand brakes.
G. M.—General manager.
GON—A gondola or steel-sided, flat bottom coal car.
GRABBER—Conductor
GRAMAPHONE—Telephone
GRAVEYARD WATCH—12.01 A.M. to 8 A.M
GREASY SPOON—A railroad eating house
GREEN BACKS—Frogs for rerailing cars or engines.
GUM SHOE—Railroad policeman.
GUN—A torpedo; the injector on the locomotive which forces water from tank to boiler.

HACK—Another term for caboose
HAM—A telegraph operator. Usually referred to one of a poorer variety.
HAND SHOES—Gloves.
HARNESS—Passenger conductor's uniform.
HAY-BURNER—Hand oil lantern.
HEAD MAN—The brakeman who, on freight trains, rides the engine.
HEAD PIN—The head brakeman.
HEARSE—Caboose.
HERDER—A man who couples engines on and takes them off on the arrival and departure of trains.
HIGHBALL—Signal waved by the hand or by lamp in a high, wide semiarc, the meaning of which is to get out of town at full speed ahead.
HIGHBALL ARTIST—A locomotive engineer who is noted for fast running.
HIGH DADDY—Make a flying switch; drop.
HIGH IRON—The main line or the high speed track of a system of main tracks.
HIGHLINER—Main line fast passenger.
HIGH-WHEELER—Passenger locomotive; a fast passenger train; a highball artist
HITTING THE GRIT—Falling off a car
HOG—A locomotive.
HOGGER—A locomotive engineer.
HOGHEAD—A locomotive engineer
HOG LAW—The Federal statute which provides that all train and engine crews tie up after sixteen hours of continuous service; also called dog law
HOLE—Term applied to passing track where one train pulls in to meet another
HOME GUARD—One who stays with one railroad
HOOK—Wrecking crane or auxiliary

HOPPER—A steel-sided coal car with a hopper bottom which allows the unloading from that point.
HOP-TOAD—Derail
HOSE COUPLER—A brakeman who handles trains around a big passenger terminal with the road engine by himself
HOT BOX—Overheated journal or bearing.
HOT FOOTER—Engineer or conductor in switching service who is always in a hurry.
HOT SHOT—A fast train of any class Sometimes called a highball run.
HUMP—An artificial knoll at the end of a classification yard over which cars are pushed to be allowed to roll to separate tracks on their own momentum
HUT—A term sometimes applied to a caboose and sometimes applied to the cab of a locomotive

IN THE HOLE—On a siding
INVESTIGATION—Up on the carpet.
IRON SKULL—A boiler maker

JACK—Locomotive.
JAM BUSTER—Assistant yardmaster.
JEWEL—Journal brass.
JERK SOUP OR JERK A DRINK—To take water from a track pan without stopping the train.
JIGGER—A full tonnage train of dead freight.
JOHNSON BAR—Reverse lever on a locomotive.
JUGGLER—A term applied sometimes to members of the train crew of way freight runs, whose duties require them to load and unload less than carload freight at station stops

KANGAROO COURT—A hearing in which matters of main line mix-ups are investigated and disposed of.
KEELEY—Water can for hot or heated journals.
KETTLE—A locomotive.
KICK—Applied to switching; the act of pushing a car or cars at speed ahead or behind an engine, and then suddenly cutting the car or cars loose from the engine while the brakes are applied quickly to the engine, thus allowing the cars to be kicked free.
KICKER—A triple valve that sticks and throws brakes into emergency with application of air and sometimes by a bump of the train.
KING—Freight conductor—sometimes applied to the yardmaster.
KING SNIPE—Foreman of track gang.
KNOWLEDGE BOX—Yardmaster's office.

LADDER—The main track of a system of tracks which comprise a yard and from which each individual track leads off. This is also called a lead.
LEAD—See ladder
LETTERS—Service certificates.
LEVER-JERKER—Interlocker lever man.
LIGHTNING SLINGER—Telegraph operator.
LIZARD SCORCHER—Cook
LOUSE CAGE—Caboose.
LUNG—Drawbar.

MAIN IRON—Main track.
MAIN PIN—An official
MAIN STEM—The main line
MAKING A HITCH—Coupling two cars together.
MANIFEST—Fast freight, usually made up of merchandise and perishables.
MARKER—Rear end signal.
MASTER—Conductor
MASTER MANIAC—The master mechanic.
MASTER MIND—Sometimes applied to trainmaster, yardmaster and conductor, also to the train dispatchers.
MEAL BOOK—Pie card or grazing ticket.
MILL—Steam locomotive; typewriter.
MILL KETTLE—Locomotive.
MODOC—Employees' train.
MONKEY HOUSE—Caboose.
MONKEY MOTION—Link motion.
MUD CHICKEN—Surveyor.
MUDHOP—Yard clerk.

NO-BILL—Non-air employee.
NON-AIR—A non-union railroad worker.
NUMBER DUMMY—Yard clerk.
NUMBER GRABBER—Car clerk.
NUT SPLITTER—Machinist.

OLD MAN—Superintendent
OP—A telegraph operator.
O. R. C.—A conductor.
ORDER BOARD—A fixed signal to indicate to approaching trains whether to pick up train orders or to proceed.
ORNAMENT Station master.
O-SING—Reporting a train by a station to the division dispatcher.
OUTLAWED—A crew that has worked 16 hours, the limit allowed by law.

PADDLE—Semaphore signal.
PALACE—A term applied to the caboose
PARLOR—Caboose
PARLOR MAN—The hind brakeman or flagman on a freight train
PIG—Locomotive.
PIG MAULER—Locomotive engineer.
PIG-PEN—Locomotive roundhouse.
PIN—Sometimes applied to a brakeman.
PIN AHEAD AND PICK UP TWO BEHIND ONE—Cut off the engine and pick up three cars from the siding, put two on the train and set the first one back on the siding.
PIN FOR HOME—To go home.
PINHEAD—Applied to brakeman.
PINK—Caution card
PINNER—Switchman that follows
PIN-PULLER The man who cuts off the cars switching
PLAY BALL—Get busy; go to work; quit fooling
PLUG—One horse passenger train.

POSSUM BELLY—Tool box under caboose
PULL THE PIN—To resign, or quit a job.
PUTTY—Steam

RAIL—A railroad employee. Usually referred to men in transportation service
RATTLER—A freight train
RAWHIDER—A conductor or engineer who is especially hard on men and equipment. This term is chiefly applied to engineers who punish locomotives to the limit without getting satisfactory results.
RED BALL—Fast freight.
RED BOARD—Fixed signal at stop.
RED ONION—Railroad eating house.
REEFER—Refrigerator car
RINGMASTER—Yardmaster.
ROOF GARDEN—A mallet type or a helper on a mountain job.
RUBBERNECK CAR—Observation car.
RULE G—Thou shalt not drink.
RUNTY—Dwarf signal.

SACRED OX—A mallet type or a helper on a mountain job.
SCISSOR-BILL—Applied to either yard or road brakeman and a term which is not considered complimentary; a student in train service.
SCOOP—The step on the front and rear end of switch engines.
SECRET WORKS—Automatic air brake application.
SHACK—A brakeman
SHACK STINGER—Brakeman.
SHANTY—A caboose.
SHINING TIME—Starting time.
SHUFFLE THE DECK—Used by local brakemen for switching housetracks at every station
SHUNTING BOILER -Switch engine.
SIDEDOOR PULLMAN—Box car.
SKIPPER—Conductor.
SLAVE DRIVER—Yardmaster.
SMART ALEC—Conductor.
SMOKE—Fireman.
SMOKER—Locomotive.
SMOKING 'EM—A method of getting from one station to another without orders, moving along slowly, watching for the smoke of an approaching train. Very dangerous business, but often done.
SNAKE—Switchman
SNIPE—Track laborer
SNOOZER—Pullman car
SOFT BELLIES—Wooden frame cars.
SPAR—A pole used to shove cars in the clear when switching.
SPEEDY—Call boy.
SPOTTER—A man assigned to snoop around to check up on conduct of employees
STICK—A staff used on certain stretches of track for the purpose of controlling the block. It is carried by engine crews from one station to another
STINGER—Brakeman.
STOKER—Fireman
STOPPER PULLER—A member of the crew that follows the engine in switching.
STRING—A cut of cars; several cars coupled together
STRINGS—Telegraph wires.
STUDENT—A learner in either telegraph, train or engine service
SUPER—A superintendent.
SWELL HEAD—Conductor

TALLOWPOT—Locomotive fireman.
TANK—Locomotive tender.
TEAKETTLE—Usually applied to leaky old locomotives.
TEDDY—Sixteen-hour law
THE HOOK—The wrecker
THOUSAND MILER—A starched blue shirt with an attachable starched blue collar of deep hue worn by railroad men universally and especially as an insignia of rank among boomers of a bygone era.
TICKET PUNCH -Pair of pliers.
TIE 'EM DOWN—To set hand brakes.
TOAD—Derailer
TOEPATH—Running board.
TRAIN DETAINER—Train dispatcher
TRAIN LINE—The pipe that carries the compressed air used to operate the air brakes.
TRAVELING GRUNT—A road foreman of engines.
TRAVELING MAN—Usually applied to the traveling engineer or the traveling fireman.
TRICK—Applied to tour of duty.
TRIP—The course of a tour of duty from one terminal to another and return

UNDERGROUND HOG—Chief engineer.

VARNISHED WAGONS—Passenger train equipment.

WAGONS—See buggies.
WASHOUT—A stop signal waved violently by using both arms and swinging them in a downward arc by day, and swinging a lamp in a wide, low semicircle across the tracks by night.
WAY-CAR—Caboose.
WHALE BELLY—A type of coal car.
WHEN DO YOU SHINE?—What time were you called for?
WILLIE—Waybill
WING HER—Set the brakes on a moving train.
WYE—Tracks running off main line or lead, forming rough letter "Y" and used to turn cars or to reverse direction of trains. Used to reverse engines at points where no turntable is available.

YARD—A system of tracks for the making of trains or the storing of cars. A system of tracks surrounded by a high board fence run and inhabited by a bunch of natives that will not let a train in or out.—Boomer's version
YARD GEESE—Yard switchmen.
Y. M.—Yardmaster

ZULU—An emigrant outfit.

The Boomers' Corner

HOWDY, Boomers, and worthy brothers of the Mystic Sons of the Itchy Feet! We bring you the same brand of greeting that usually goes with calm June days, lazy weather and the yearning to be somewhere where you are not, right now. This is the time of the year unfortunately when all of us begin to remember that Helper is a pretty swell place if we happen to be in Kansas City, or that Kansas City has a lure to us if we happen to find ourselves staked out on a road in Idaho. It was ever thus, and it looks like it always will be that way as long as a certain breed of human beings has the uncontrollable desire to find out what is around the next bend and a yearning for the view that might be had over the next hill.

* * *

A Tale of Woe

Some of us when we have seen what there is to see, come away in moments of darkness to a lot of regrets, and we are sorry we ever pulled the pin on our first job to become a son of the rolling rust. For instance, there is a brother up in Michigan and he has a tale of woe:

DEAR BOOMER:

Just a few lines from one of the boys. I have three copies of your magazine here and am going down to get the fourth one tomorrow. I sure do get plenty of words from the good wife for sticking my nose into the old magazine so much.

I have been out of freight service for nine years and, oh, what a fool I have been. The two boys who ran away from home with me to Atlanta, Georgia, back in that dim past, to get a job with the Southern Railroad, are hogheads now. Me? I am only a paper maker at the present time and I don't like it a little bit. There isn't a Sunday that passes but what I don't drive up the highway and watch the hot shots wheel by at seventy miles an hour, and it gives me a kind of the thing they call the Blues of the Rails. I would like to hear from some of my old hoghead friends.

Frank Carr, of the Southern out of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Guy J. Conly, who pulls the Palm out of Atlanta.

Uncle Job Reading, of Atlanta.

Andy Walker, of the Atlanta and Chattanooga Local.

How about you, boys? Come on and let me hear from you. Maybe you can write a word of cheer to this broken boomer heart.

I have just finished reading in the last issue of Boomer (G. W.) Brown's bad luck. I am now in your shoes, boomer, and I sure would like to get a job back on the road, but there is nothing doing as usual. I have tried every road in this part of the country but the New York Central, and I am sending in my application to that pike to-night. Yes, Brother Brown, it is tough and I can sympathize with you.

Now come on all of you hoggers and pals of my better days, let's keep the old magazine going.

R. P. EDMONDSON,
Monroe, Mich.

* * *

On the Rip Now

A Canadian brother writes in to give his whereabouts and to ask for some of his old cronies to correspond with him:

DEAR BOOMER:

I like to read the Boomers' Corner. It sounds all right and it makes great reading, but those days are gone forever. If you don't believe it start out from here like I did when I was cut off on the C. N. R. in the spring of 1925. I left home with nothing but an up-to-date receipt and a lot of nerve. I could tell you some amusing stories of how I would chase some switch engine where a brother was carrying a meal ticket "good for one meal and don't come again."

I landed in Oakland, California, and struck a job on the S. P. Then I went north to Marysville and drove a white mule in a nursery until I made money enough to hold me up while I was writing up the book of

rules and going by the doctor. While I did this I also sent my family fifty dollars before I made a trip on the S. P., all by driving Tony—that was the mule's moniker. I sure did laugh to myself sometimes. There had been Japs working on this place before I smoked in and they had just about spoiled Tony, for every time I would give Tony a signal to proceed he would swing me down with his tail

Brother, I am no two State boomer, and I would like to hear from some of the fellows I have worked with. I am on the spot at present, having lost a wheel last summer.

JESSE STANLEY,
19 Fraser Block, Calgary, Alberta, Can.

* * *

Welcome to the Gang

Is Brother Penington a boomer? We hope to tell you he is. He wants to know if he can come in and take a seat and chew the rag a while. He sends along his qualifications. We will let the other brothers confirm our opinion. We say that Penington *is* a boomer:

DEAR BOOMER:

The picture of friend brakeman doing a hot foot to open a switch was received. Many thanks. Kindly let me know if I can claim a seat in the Boomers' Corner. I have worked in many places and for several roads. I am giving you the names of the roads as they were in my day—

Central Railroad of New Jersey, 1890, also 1918.
New York, West Shore and Buffalo, 1890.
Savannah, Florida and Western, 1890.
Florida Central and Peninsula, 1894.
Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Indian River, 1894.
Buffalo, Lockport and Rochester, 1908
Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh, 1909.
Lehigh Valley, 1909.
Erie, 1909
New York Central, 1910.
Santa Fe, 1910
Chicago and Western, 1910.
Florida East Coast, 1918.
Great Northern, 1921

And, boy, believe it or not, I am crowding sixty years of age

CHARLES K. PENINGTON,
3105 Clark Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.

* * *

A Booming Record

Another brother rises up to proclaim that Brother Dennis Sloan is not the only boomer who has worked on a lot of pikes. In fact, when Brother Thomas submitted the following he put a notation over it "An amateur's letter for the Boomers' Corner," and we don't agree with Brother Thomas at all on that word "amateur," but Brother Thomas can best express himself:

DEAR BOOMER:

I wish to ask the editor's pardon as I was once under the impression I had been a boomer until I read Dennis Sloan's letter in the February issue of the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE. Since then I see I was only an "amateur," for I have only worked for the following roads and am now near sixty years of age: I. C., three; Y. & M. V., one; Frisco, twelve; Ft. W. & R. G., two; MoP, one; M. K. & T., three (and Joint, one); M. & O., one; Iron Mountain, one; Cotton Belt, one, Santa Fe, one (and Joint, two); K. C. F. S. & M., five; International Mexicana, one, S. P., four; T. & B. V., one; (Joint with Rock Island, two); and a few I have forgotten, though Dennis is only thirty-seven years old, so I take my hat off to him

My dissipated career has all been spent in train and yard service, stinger-snake and conductor, though I did break away long enough to answer President McKinley's call and spent twenty-eight months in the army in the Philippine Islands and made a short call in Nagasaki, Japan, and Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands.

In one instance only I believe I have Dennis skinned. Going across the Pond we crossed the 180th meridian Wednesday night, November 27. The next day on the other side was Friday, November 29, so we had no Thanksgiving Day that year. Coming back we crossed the 180th January 1 and the next day on this side was January 1. That year I had two first days of January.

I have picked up each issue of the new magazine since the first publication, and as soon as I finish reading it I hand it out to some one, in order to advertise it, so others who know nothing of it will find where there is something good to read.

I am still in the game, having been home-guarding here twelve years where Father Time caught me

ARTHUR J. (FATTY) THOMAS,
1025 Fifth Avenue, Ft. Worth, Texas
(O. R. C. Div. 57)

* * *

Boomer Philosophy

Now along comes real philosophy. Brother Archie Miller, former bakehead and hoghead, has a line of reasoning which is worth a lot of consideration, to wit:

DEAR BOOMER:

Being an old rail, like many others, I have found much pleasure in the return of the old RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE to the news-

stands. And no doubt, like thousands of others, it was like meeting an old pal out along the line, for, after all, there is nothing new in the old saying that "once a rail, always a rail," at heart at least

But fortunately or unfortunately, for some of us the day of the boomer is long gone. In consequence, many of us who saw the handwriting on the wall, with the advent of big power and bigger trains, have got out from under. Have drifted into crafts which at least offer a livelihood. Although we're still rails at heart. Don't misunderstand, the rail is still as much in my blood as ever

For many years I was in engine service, but when the big power showed up along the line I could see the jig was up, and after a talk with the superintendent I was more sure of it than ever. So to-day finds me the guiding genius on one of these rather contrary contraptions which each evening spreads the color (ink) on a daily newspaper. Nevertheless, every time a drag whistles off for a trip over the west mountain, or the varnished wagons come sliding by within a block of my home, somehow I can't help being a little homesick for the old cab again.

And to this extent I imagine that your magazine is a kind of godsend to many of us ex-rails scattered over the country. Unquestionably by now the country is full of them, but common sense tells me that I've shot the works on the rail. When one has passed a certain age there and hasn't been able to establish enough seniority to hold a year-round job, he'd better quit. This goes for many of the boys who still hang around the dog house and the railroad beaneries, hoping that the company will put the mikes back into service and 2200-ton trains. All I can say is they'll be waiting a h— of a long time.

Promotion in engine service on all western transcontinental lines undoubtedly must go to the younger generation coming up.

Relative to a reference in the February issue of RAILROAD MAN'S pertaining to a proposed issue of a Boomers' Card by the publishing company. For one, if you will permit the assumption, I feel that it is a good idea, but, of course, aside from the unestimated advertising value, I also realize the enormous cost to you of such an undertaking Certainly the undertaking can only strengthen an already large circle of friends. For you know only too well the vices and virtues of a rail, viz, women, back pay and anything they can get for nothing. The last, of course, is only figuratively speaking. Every true rail in the land would deny the allegation, but his fingers would be crossed nevertheless. Anyway I'm speaking as an ex-rail, and must also come in the same category.

But as a suggestion, based upon the breakdown of the boomers' paradise, and prompted by the many wails which I read in the mag each month, particularly to those who are still bucking extra boards, with old age creeping on, just a common sense analysis of their own position on the board, with even a fair comprehension of the percentage of old age retirements. Believe me the old age retirement, aside from a few rare instances, just about determines the rate of promotion nowadays. This at least should convince a man as to the advisability of staying or quitting. Either it's in the cards for us, or it's not. If it is, play the game and stick it out, if not, why cry? Make the best of it. Why starve in bucking the board when there isn't a chance? Leave that to some of the younger boys who have a chance and can stand it.

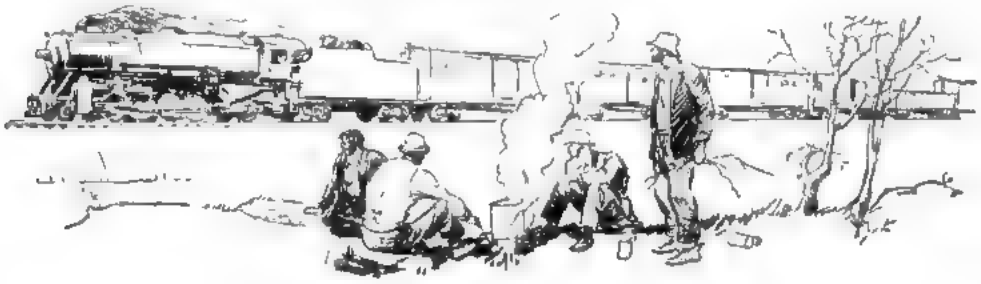
ARCHIE J. MILLER,
104 Spruce St., La Grande, Ore.

* * *

Missing Men

Archie Miller, whose letter appears above, wants to hear from Pete Van Pelt, from the Transvaal who once was on the Western Pacific out of Salt Lake, and the Union Pacific. Last heard of Brother Pete was on the Southern Pacific out of Dunsmuir. Any one who knows anything about Pete will confer a favor on Archie by writing to his address given on the letter above.

Rosa V. Kline, of Smithsburg, Maryland, has written in to inquire for her brother, Milton G. Schildtknecht, last heard from in 1916 at Manteca, California. He formerly was from Maryland. His age now is forty years. He has dark hair and is about five feet eight inches tall.



On the Spot

HERE we are again this month with "Our Own Language." You remember? Last January we printed a couple of pages of railroad slang and semitechnical terms not only for those readers who might not know what the author meant by a stinger and a snake, but also for the boys themselves who use special language every day in this great business of train operation and national transportation.

In compiling this new list, which contains many words and phrases that weren't in the January list, we checked up on two unabridged dictionaries and were unable to find even such a common railroad expression as "eagle-eye." Here we have several columns of perfectly good words—international words as far as Western Hemisphere railroading is concerned—and the gents who guide the destinies of the English language and make up the authoritative dictionaries, don't give us a tumble. So we'll have to keep our own dictionary, and we hope you like it.

In the April issue we printed a story called "The King," by Bob Cross, and while we're all sitting around here waiting for the next move, the editors want to thank those readers who have written in about this story. Mr. Cross wants to thank them, too. One reader expressed the thought that Mr. Cross "certainly knows a railroad yard." Yeh, he does. He's been everything in the yards from lowliest mudhop to king of the garden. He's switched, fired and held down main line freight jobs as a brakeman. Bob knows his lead switch lights and his high line targets, and he'll be back often to amuse you with stories of the frolics in the field at Bayside, Redwood, and other yards. Sorry we can't tell you any more about Bob now. He's a shy, retiring sort of delegate, so we'll just pass along a few of the comments. Here they are:

When you print another one like "The King" advise me in advance, so I can get my magazine in the morning. I bought the April number in the afternoon and took it home I read a good deal in it until it got pretty late. Then I took up "The King" as a sort of nightcap. That was bad, I had my night

all broken up and from the language passed out by the rest of the family, I broke up the night for a few others. I laugh like that. Don't forget. Next time warn us!

H. E.,
Buffalo, N. Y.

Give us another hot shot like "The King" Best one you've handed us yet, and that's saying something. Laughed my fool head off

C. F. H.,
Altoona, Pa.

The guy who wrote "The King" certainly knows his railroad yards. You've given 'em to us good, but you haven't given 'em to us any better than that one. My top vote goes to "The King."

L. R. G.,
Oklahoma City, Okla.

"The King," by Bob Cross, was better than good in anybody's magazine. There is some character portrayal there that gets right under my skin.

R. F. B.,
Pratt, Kansas.

Your last issue was great. "The King" was sure true to life. Give the boys some more by the same author

G. N. B.,
Red Bank, N. J.

* * *

About Our Covers

We have given you, to date, seven issues of the new RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE, which, of course, means that you have seen a variety of cover illustrations. We haven't heard from many of you on what you have thought of these covers, but we have heard from one brother who takes us to task for what he calls our lack of judgment in printing a cover that will please rails generally. He writes:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

For five whole months, ever since your first issue came out last December, I have been waiting to see another cover illustration on the magazine that an honest-to-gosh railroader could point to with pride, and enjoy. Now speaking of that December picture, it was a wow. It had a lot of class. It was something real. A rail would look at that cover and just about feel that here *is* a magazine for railroaders—a magazine railroaders can appreciate and understand. A magazine full of the color and spice that you can only get into a story by using the language we use.

Along comes January and you have a sickly-looking cover of an engine with a red wheel and an airplane swooping through the clouds. Your contents are all right—good railroading all the way—but that cover wouldn't lead anybody to think so. Then to add insult to injury you go and slap on a line "For Everybody." If you are going to make a railroad magazine for everybody, you can't make it for railroaders. We want our railroading straight, and if you go making railroad stories to interest dock hands or street cleaners or high school boys or garage mechanics, you certainly won't have anything in those stories that'll interest a rail. I've heard scores of men up and down the N. Y. C. criticize that "For Everybody" line, and I know of some instances where the men are not buying the book because you got them scared off. They think you're putting out something like these cheap war magazines that are made for "everybody" but a man who fought in the war or was in the army. And the air magazines. They don't get anything but a sarcastic laugh out of aviators.

You then gave us a February cover that you couldn't see ten feet away. Boy, that was terrible. That was the worst of the lot. March came along with something a little better, but still nothing like December's example you set, and April, I realize, was just something based on a couple of old-timers, and not for me to make a noise about.

Listen, editor. There's about a million of us in the railroad transportation end of the game. Firemen, brakemen, conductors, engineers, operators, dispatchers, signalmen, etc., and if you make a magazine for us according to the book of rules, and forget the everybody stuff, you are going to get real results, and you'll have more boosters than you can take care of. Give us covers like you did in December. Give us true railroading in railroad terms with your facts and your fiction stories and you won't regret it as far as the railroad boys are concerned.

JOHN P. JOHNS,
Freight Conductor, N. Y. C.,
New York City.

* * *

Largest Yards

Our readers often take exception to things we say in stories or articles. We are glad they do. When we overlook something we want to get it straight as soon as possible. Well, here goes:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Just a few lines to let you know that I am one of your readers and that I read a small article in your March number stating that according to your best information the Altoona yards of the Pennsylvania are the largest in the world.

I would like to correct this. The Proviso

yards of the Chicago & North Western in the Chicago terminal district are the largest in the world, with 260 miles of track and standing room for 26,000 cars.

F. R. K.,
West Chicago, Ill.

* * *

Main Street a Railroad

Another reader says he has found a town built around a track, besides the one we mentioned in March:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

In the March issue of your magazine appeared an article stating that Midlake, Utah, was the only village in the United States having a railroad for its main or only street.

Please allow me to differ. On the Florida East Coast Railway, located at mile post 478, we have the village of Pigeon Key, Florida. It has no streets, sidewalks, nor other improvements of this kind; there is hardly room for them as this tiny key, or island, is only three and three-quarter acres. Pigeon Key is populated by employees of the railway and their families; it has a post office, church and school. One family has a cow, and there are a few chickens. Pigeon Key is probably the smallest inhabited bit of land in the world.

The employees here are employed on Knight's Key Bridge, the longest railroad bridge in the world, spanning the Atlantic Ocean for seven miles and passing directly over Pigeon Key about halfway. A passenger on one of our trains almost loses sight of land traveling across this bridge, the low-lying islands on either side appearing as strips of green on the horizon. One has the sensation of being on a seagoing railroad, skimming over the sub-tropical Atlantic, marvelous in coloring due to reflection of the lime rock, coral and marine growths at the bottom. Thousands of visitors pass over this bridge on the way to Key West or Cuba.

I look forward each month to the next issue of your magazine, and was glad to see it again on the news-stands after a long absence. The articles and fiction "hit the spot" with me, as I was one of the readers of the same prior to your company discontinuing the magazine.

W. B. M., Stationmaster,
Miami, Fla

* * *

Stories or Features?

Sometimes a reader will tell us we print too many articles—less education and more fun, that's his idea. Then another will up and flatly say the opposite. The news-stands are swamped with fiction already, maybe he puts it. Those who have a preference one way or the other are heartily invited to cut loose with it, just as this reader has:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

I read an "On the Spot" letter some time ago that burned me up. This writer asked you to discontinue the features. This writer was either a young kid or he was not a "rail," because a rail would be just as much interested in a good feature as in a story. Some of 'em more so.

The kind of features that I eat up whole are: "That Hush-Hush Hog," "These Hogs Set Styles Twenty-Five Years Ago," "The Juice Era," and many earlier features. What I say is bigger and better features as well as stories.

I can remember when I was twelve years old, how I broke into a shed to get a lot of RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINES. I wanted to look at the pictures and read the feature articles. When the owner caught me I explained what I wanted and he gave me a lot of the magazines.

You will notice that my "best stories" coupon is blank. That means I haven't found any bum stories to mark out yet. There is only one bad thing I can say about your magazine—it is a monthly and not a weekly.

F. T. J.,
San Francisco, Cal.

* * *

Another friend comes to the support of the features:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Say, regarding the letter from E. F. H., I would like to register my sentiments in this connection. I can fully sympathize with E. F. H.'s desire for more stories, but you are now producing a well-balanced magazine and its variety is one of its attractions. I do not think the features should be cut down, as they are interesting, instructive, and inspiring.

Running two serials is O. K. and has its benefits. I find that segregating the events of each story in my mind between issues is a good memory trainer. With all best wishes.

A. S.,
Vancouver, B. C.

* * *

Honk and Horace

After having been deluged with requests for the return of *Honk* and *Horace* to these pages, and after having complied, we are confronted with the situation below, and we'd like to have your candid opinion. Read these two letters, then write in and let us know what *you* think.

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

I see you have *Honk* and *Horace* back in your April issue. I read with interest the com-

ments in this department on the demand for the return of these characters, and of your efforts to locate the author. Now that you have *Honk* and *Horace* with you, I am wondering what all the fuss was about. For myself personally you can leave them out from now on and give us a real bang up story—or maybe two stories in the space these fellows occupy. This is only the opinion of a C. & N. W. brakeman, but I can't, for the life of me, see wading through thirteen pages of that stuff

V. J. W.,
Chicago, Ill.

* * *

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Hurrah for *Honk* and *Horace*. That was the first thing I read in your April number, which I have just bought. I sure am glad you finally located Brother Harte, and I'm mighty certain you aren't going to be sorry you made this move. Yes, sir, those characters sure seem familiar, and just as humorous as ever after all these years. You can leave anything else out of the book, but don't omit these boys from a single issue. They know their stuff.

D. K.,
American Falls, Idaho

* * *

To Keep Awake

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

When the original RAILROAD MAN'S was in its prime, I was just a kid. I remember with pleasure "The Observations of a Country Station Agent," "Honk and Horace," "By the Light of the Lantern," and the authoress of the poem on the December frontispiece. Later on, coming from a long line of railroaders, I took up telegraphy. Your first magazine has helped me while away many a long night on third trick out in the sticks, and when it was due on the stands I would spend my daylight hours on a train bound for some town to get one and keep awake that night reading it. It is with a good deal of pleasure that I see you open the throttle and head out on the main.

R. W. P.,
Roanoke, Va.

* * *

Snake on the Tank

Some say railroading is just one crazy experience after another. Take this one, for instance:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

In 1904 I was fireman on the old C. H. & D. between Lima and Toledo. We were sent over to Bowling Green to pick up a circus train. On the way back to Lima we stopped at Deshler about 2 A.M. It was very dark. I took my lantern and went back over the coal to take a tank of water. I had just opened the valve when I had a hunch that everything was not right. Then glancing around I saw a dark form swaying by the side of the tank—coiling like a snake, and edging over toward me.

I dropped my lantern and slid down over the coal to the deck of the engine with my face the color of chalk. I told the engineer there was a snake up there. He laughed, but didn't go back to see. He wanted to know what I had been drinking. Then the head brakeman came over, and he called some of the circus employees. They came and showed that my snake was the trunk of an elephant in the car next the tender, who had smelled the water and reached out for a drink.

I am a reader of the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE and enjoy it very much.

W. J.,
Goshen, Ind.

* * *

Votes for Us

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Sure was tickled the other day. While down town I happened to pass a news-stand, and saw an old-timer back again. Of course, I bought the first copy. Got an awful wallop out of it. Bought the second copy, another wallop. I surely hope she stays put.

S. J. P.,
Picher, Okla.

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

I have read all the "Observations of a Country Station Agent" and I want to cast my vote in favor of *Luther Leghorn*. I don't know whether this J. E. Smith has ever been a station agent, but it sure sounds like it. I get a big kick out of the observations.

K. D.,
Mill Valley, Cal.

* * *

Museum Pieces

We have a request for a little dope on the pay cars of yore. Since the pay car and the dodo bird drifted out on the same drag, we are going to pass the question on. We would be mighty grateful to any one who can supply this reader with the information he wants, or a photo; in fact, anything about pay cars:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Have enjoyed your magazine since it came out in December, and have bought every issue since. Every succeeding month it improves, so I don't believe I would care to miss a copy.

I have always had an awe of trains. I love to listen to the rumble of a train from a distance, and to hear the whistle blow.

I wonder if you could give me some information about the pay cars they used to run. Do any railroads use this method now? Could you give me some information about these pay cars and a picture of one or more types in the magazine? I am quite sure other readers will find this interesting also.

Continue to make RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE what it is and I will look forward to each issue. Your poems are fine, they have reality in them. I like the type of stories you have, and I read every department with interest.

O. E. C.,
Harrington, Del.

Poets' Corner

We have a few words of appreciation—if you can call it that—for one of the most ancient and least popular institutions of the road:

The Call Boy

Once upon a midnight dreary, as I slumbered weak and weary,
As I rent the air with many a lusty, loud and raucous snore,
Suddenly there came a rapping to disturb my peaceful napping,
As of some one roughly rapping, rapping at my chamber door;
Said I, waking: "Who in thunder's rapping at my chamber door?"
This I said—and something more!

Ah, distinctly I remember, 'twas a night in bleak December,
'Cause 'twas cold, and nary an ember wrought its ghost upon the floor;
Nary an ember threw its shadder—we had steam heat, which is sadder,
As that lobster in the hallway beat his knuckles on my door;
Loudly hammered on the panels till I thought they'd split for sure—
"Darn!" I said—and something more!

Presently my thoughts grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
From my bed I hopped a-shiver, fairly frigid to the core;
"Hi!" I yelled, my patience snapping. "If you're bound, intent on scrapping,
Just continue tapping, rapping, beating, slapping on my door!"
This I said, my night-shirt flapping, as I ambled to the door—
This, ah yes—and something more!

Deep into the darkness peering, toward the doorway I went steering;
Toward the doorway, never veering, feeling murderously sore;
And to still the angry beating of my heart, I kept repeating:
"Lobster! 'Tis a sorry greeting that I'll give you at my door.
What is more, dod-gast your crown-sheet!"
Here I opened wide the door—
On the call-boy—nothing more!

J. Edward Hungerford.

* * *

Clip Out the Coupon

The coupon below is your safety valve. It is a place where you can blow off steam; tell us what stories you like. This issue of RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE is quite varied, and we have no other way of telling whether we are providing the right kind of reading material all the way through. Save the coupon. When you get three coupons from three issues in a row—mail them to us. Tell us what illustration in the book appeals to you, and we will try to send you the original drawing. If already spoken for, we will send you some drawing similar. Highball—

"HERE'S MY VOTE"

Editor,
RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE,
280 Broadway, N. Y. C., N. Y.

The stories I like best in this issue of the magazine are as follows:

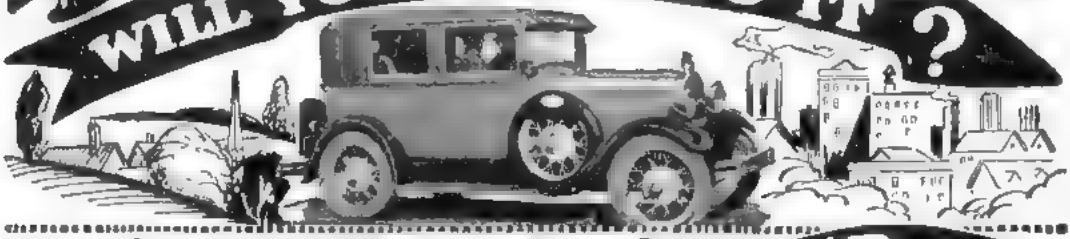
1.....
2.....
3.....
4.....
5.....
6.....

Name .....
Occupation.....
Street .....
City ..... *State* .....

[6]

42 Miles on 1 Gallon of GAS

WILL YOUR CAR DO IT?



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	Miles		Miles		Miles		Miles
Buick	28	Ford (Model T)	42	Oakland	31	Pierce Arrow	22
Cadillac	21	Ford (Model A)	40	Oldsmobile	34½	Pontiac	31
Chevrolet	41	Hudson	23½	Overland	41	Reo	26½
Chrysler	30½	Hupmobile	24	Packard	21	Star	41½
Dodge	31½	Marmon	21½	Plymouth	29	Studebaker	29
Essex	32	Nash	30	Graham-Paige	23½	Willys-Knight	29

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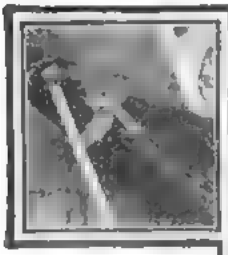

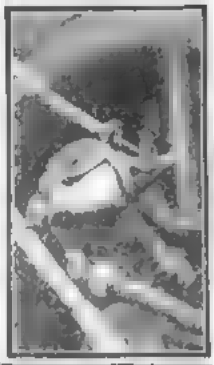

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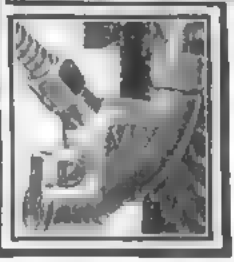

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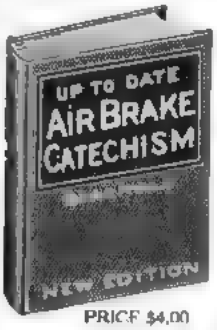

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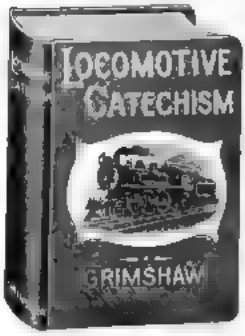

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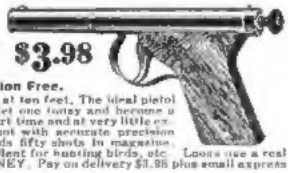

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